

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

MOBILITY, EDUCATION AND  
EMPLOYMENT AMONGST SOUTH  
ASIAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN  
THE UK

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## **Dedication**

*To my parents and family*

*For their love, sacrifice and support.*

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ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

DEPARTMENT OF ART, LAW AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

‘MOBILITY, EDUCATION, AND EMPLOYMENT AMONGST SOUTH ASIAN  
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE UK’

DWARKA NAYAK

This study investigates the experiences of South Asian international students at the nexus of mobility, education, and employment in the UK. The study adopts Bourdieu’s theoretical lens to explore how individual students understand, seek, and achieve advantages through participation in education, the labour market, and wider society.

Despite the significant numbers of South Asian international students in the UK, we know little about their specific experiences. This study used a qualitative led, mixed method approach in addressing this gap and researched the experiences of students from South Asia enrolled at nine post-1992 universities in London. After an initial, exploratory online survey of 148 students, 51 in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with students on campus.

The survey and interviews highlight the diversity of backgrounds and experiences of South Asian students and their varied trajectories. The analysis uses a four-part typology to make sense of this diversity: Highflyers, Realists, Credentialists, and Strugglers possess, develop, and mobilise varied combinations of economic, social, and cultural capital. The research highlights how student mobility is a family project dependent on the resources and emotional investment of relatives. Much of the literature emphasises the challenges faced by international students, but despite the reality of these difficulties and their varied prospects, most participants in this study are broadly satisfied with their decision to come to the UK and confident that it will provide them with a competitive edge in their future career.

Students’ optimism is rooted in their experiences beyond the classroom. In particular, many are inspired by the adventure of moving abroad and the opportunities for personal development and the freedom it affords. The resulting narratives of self are seen as important, valuable assets when students return home and embark on careers.

Keywords- International students, Social reproduction, Mobility, Student migration

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## ABBREVIATION

AIIMS	All India Institute of Medical Sciences
IIT	Indian Institute of Technology
IIM	Indian Institute of Management
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HESA	Higher Education Statistical Agency (UK)
ISM	International Student Mobility
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation
UG	Undergraduate
PG	Postgraduate
PR	Permanent Residency Permit
PSW	Post Study Work Permit
UK	United Kingdom
US/USA	United States of America
UKBA	UK Border Agency
UKCISA	UK Council for International Student Affairs
UKCOSA	The UK Council for International Education
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
NON-EU	Outside European Union

## STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This thesis is based on the empirical study conducted by Dwarka Nayak between 2013-14. I declare that I have personally undertaken this original research and that the thesis or any of its parts has not been used to obtain other academic qualifications in any other time location.

I, at this moment, declare that apart from the academic work explicitly acknowledged, the empirical evidence, the thesis, and all contributing material of the thesis are solely my work.

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Signature.....

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Signature.....

## INTRODUCTION

Student migration is represented in academic literature in two contrasting and sometimes, contradictory ways. Optimistic presentations focus on its significance in the nexus of skilled migration, the internationalisation of education, and a global competition of the 'best and the brightest,' where students are given the opportunity to share in a lucrative globalising education market with all the rewards that success in this arena can bring. In contrast, a more pessimistic view describes the international student body as a vulnerable group facing tougher policy filters, losing formal rights and being the victim of violence and discrimination in destination countries such as Australia. The contradiction in this understanding of student migration continues to mount when international student mobility becomes problematic due to its role in intensifying anti-migration feelings, dividing public opinion in national politics and presenting new challenges in how to manage major flows of students from abroad. A full and accurate image of the international student body is more complex and requires an understanding of their motives, purpose, and strategies for pursuing expensive, but rewarding, foreign education and why they favour it over local provision. South Asian international students in the United Kingdom (UK) are currently facing a dilemma following British policy restrictions, which aim to control international student mobility (ISM) from Non-European Union (Non-EU) regions, into the UK. By imposing restrictions, a nationwide debate has been triggered by the perceived need to protect the British economy and national interests from immigration abuse by the excessive influx of Non-EU students; a problem, which had formerly gone unnoticed. As a result, Non-EUism in the UK is now seen as a problem, which requires fixing. However, despite the sparking of debates, either to support or resist British policy initiatives for student migration, there has been a serious lack of attention given to understanding the experiences and perceptions of the overseas student body itself, in the UK; in particular, the social demand side of student migration from South Asia. This contributes significantly to ISM flows to the UK, has been missing from the discussion, and given little or no scholarly attention. The existing body of knowledge fails to explain why a large number of people from South Asia go beyond national borders for education and how this migration might benefit thousands of families in South Asia. Our understanding of international students from the Asia region who travel to the UK has, in general, been limited to the interrogation of their collective experiences, mainly looking at cross-cultural adoption, challenges and educational experiences, while south Asians were rarely discussed. This study is intended

to fill this gap by exploring the experiences of cross-border mobility, international education, and employment among South Asian international students. It aims to understand their motivation for attending British education, their experiences during academic transitions, and what they perceived to be the valuable outcomes of their education in the UK.

In addition, this study seeks to incorporate the vision and the work of Pierre Bourdieu to theorise student migration in relation to the inflating demand for western style education among the elite and emerging middle-class families of South Asia. A key question is how South Asian families use British education, and its outcomes for their children to (re) produce social class privileges by gaining a competitive edge in the competition for employment and labour market rewards. Following this interest, the title of the research reflects three major dimensions of student migration in the UK from South Asia: cross-border mobility, the capacity and willingness to go beyond national territory to acquire British higher education, and how this enables students to gain positional advantages in the form of decent employment or socially constructed rewards and class privileges. These three elements, embedded into migration for education, together symbolise the desire for the social (re) production of class distinctions.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The questions that emerged from the literature reviewed and demand an empirical investigation to better understand the experiences of South Asian international students, within the context of ‘mobility, education and employment’ in the UK, were:

1. How do international students understand the advantages of cross-border mobility in education and in particular, why do South Asian international students pursue education in the UK?
2. How do the experiences of South Asian international students in the UK fit with their social class trajectories?
3. In the light of experience, how do South Asian international students evaluate the long-term cultural, social, and economic benefits of their study in the UK?

To investigate these questions, the study followed a qualitative led mixed method approach. Given the complex nature of the study, which seeks to understand the experiences of the study cohort across time and space, a blend of quantitative and qualitative data was required. The sampling process required quantitative data to extend the scope of reliability and validity of findings while a collection of qualitative data

enabled me to explore the richness and depth of experiences of the study cohort. Both methods are mixed to create the best fit for the purpose and provided great insight into the life of South Asian international students in the UK.

## THESIS STRUCTURE AND CHAPTER ORGANISATION

The thesis consists of nine chapters followed by appendixes, data tables and references. Chapter 1 explains international student migration (ISM) worldwide and presents the current patterns and trends of ISM flows globally, regionally, and from South Asia in particular. It attempts to establish our lack of understanding of student migration from South Asia and the lack of recognition of its significance, while also emphasising the urgent need to understand the experiences of this group, following British policy shifts that are claimed to be potentially damaging to their interests and their student life in the UK. Chapter 2 investigates the existing literature to establish the theoretical ground and conceptual tools with which this research examines and interprets the experiences of the study cohort. In doing so, the theory of the social (re) production of class advantages is fully explained, and how it fits with the purpose of this study is elaborated. The additional contribution of scholarly work on mobility by John Urry (2007, 2011), and on culture capital and social (re) production by Waters (2008, 2012), Brooks (2008, 2012), Findlay and others (2010, 2011, 2012) are also discussed. The study takes advantage of their findings to present the South Asian case and demonstrate the current implications of social (re) production theory for student migration from South Asia.

Chapter 3 is designed to address methodological procedures and the rationale behind adopting a qualitative led, mix methods approach for the study. This chapter serves two purposes: 1) To define the study cohort, explain the sampling procedure and the barriers to achieving valid and reliable data in carrying out the investigation, as well as rationalising the selection of research tools, dealing with ethical issues and the approach to data analysis and presentation. 2) To present survey results that lay the foundation for the coming empirical chapters. Briefly, I explain my own experiences and benefits of shared ethnicity and culture with participants. Chapter 4, the first of five empirical chapters, seeks to demonstrate a typology and the distinct trajectories of study participants. It illustrates the social differences among participants, generating distinct trajectories on which participants are progressing, towards certain outcomes from their study in the UK. In doing so, the chapter attempts to distinguish participants from one another based on their family

attributes, social origin, and the 'capitals' that they inhabit throughout their academic journey. The chapter provides an insight into personal experiences that are different from each other, thereby defining the study cohort as a mix of various characteristics, something that previous studies have failed to recognise.

Chapter 5 examines the experiences of participants before travelling to the UK for education. It highlights the social and family background of participants, to establish how their desire to study abroad is socially conceived. It includes the motivations, purpose and the rationale behind selecting international education over national, and the UK as the destination of choice. It looks at how participants and their family come together to make a decision for overseas education and what factors they considered when they chose the UK. In this process, what role the university, education agents and family attributes play, in helping participants' decision about where to go, what to study and how to secure a university place and funding for the study, are key issues? The chapter tries to establish a relationship between desire to study abroad and its social advantages for both the family and the students themselves. The experiences of obtaining a student visa and transition to the UK are also examined.

Chapters 6 and 7 attempt to make sense of participants' experiences at university and at work to explain individual strategies to accumulate capitals for students to advance academically. In doing so, both chapters provide evidence to establish that there are differences between participants' achievements and individual approaches to accumulating capitals which best fit with their social origin and family background. In this sense, the trajectories that participants follow are not all the same but appear and develop from the capitals and resources that participants inhabit. This means some participants tend to achieve at high levels while others struggle to survive throughout their period of study abroad. In line with these findings, those who suffer from insufficient capital stock due to lack of exposure to industry and work environment deliberately adopt term-time work engagements. Both chapters attempt to maintain the key theoretical approach that participants' experiences vary in relation to their stock of capitals, family background, and social origin, and students tend to adjust capital accumulation accordingly.

In connection with previous chapters, chapter 8 analyses the perceptions and expectations of participants regarding the outcomes of their education in the UK. It explores the future pathways which participants are willing to pursue after completing their qualification in the UK. The chapter demonstrates that returning home for employment has been the most



favoured option for the majority of participants. This places a huge burden of expectations on British education to deliver its most desired, optimistic outcomes. The chapter captures the perceptions of participants about the employability of their British education and explains the relationship between their perception of educational outcomes and their ongoing trajectory. In addition, recent British policy reforms are discussed to see whether there is any contradiction between participants' expectation of accessing work and career opportunities, and the current British immigration policy framework, which is said to be affecting career prospects for South Asian international students in the UK. Lastly, Chapter 9 concludes the thesis, following a detailed discussion of the major findings of the study. It seeks to provide the answers to the research questions posed and highlights the study's original contribution to knowledge. In doing so, the theoretical assumptions upon which this study is based are tested against the findings of the study. Finally, the chapter acknowledges the limitations of the findings of this study, identifies issues that might be explored in future studies and states the significance of the current research by underlining its possible implication in future research and policy considerations.

CHAPTER 1 - INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENT MOBILITY: THE  
EXAMPLE OF SOUTH ASIAN  
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IN THE  
UK

## 1.1- INTRODUCTION

International student mobility (ISM) recently, has been problematised. On the one hand, the unanticipated growth of international students has become an immigration challenge to developed nations, affecting national politics and policies to control it. On the other hand, and as a consequence, international students have increasingly faced difficult transitions in western destinations following these political shifts. In this context, much has been said about global flows of students, competition for talent and dominance in a knowledge-driven economy challenges to pedagogy and HEIs, and the costs and benefits of ISM. At the same time, scholars have been trying to bridge the gap in our understanding of why students and their families are obsessed with international education, and, in doing so, attempt to associate social class with internationalising education and the possible ways in which it confers rewards and social distinctions. In this light, student mobility from South Asia to the UK has been exceptional as it contributes significantly to the international student body in the UK, yet these student mobility trends remain underexplored; we know little about the experiences of South Asian international students. The purpose of this chapter is to address this gap by highlighting trends, dynamics and existing knowledge of students' mobility, both worldwide and to the UK, with particular reference to South Asia. It explores how international student mobility mediates globalisation, internationalisation of higher education and social advantages. The chapter consists of three sections. Firstly, it discusses the slippery interpretations of mobility and migration of international students. These often overlap. Secondly, it examines the literature using supply-demand sides of student migration and, thirdly, it explains international student mobility trends in the UK, with particular reference to-students south Asia.

## 1.2- INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY, MIGRATION AND BEYOND

The literature focuses, primarily, on three major areas when examining student mobilities worldwide. These include 1) international education and its association with student mobilities, 2) students' experiences of migration before, during, and after study abroad and, 3) pedagogic challenges related to students' abilities to adapt, adjust, and achieve in their chosen destination country. Besides, few scholars take student mobilities to understand the pursuit for social (re) production, distinctions, or happiness as well as open up new research agenda to recognise emerging role and identities that international students seem to undertake (Raghuram, 2013). As a result, student migration has become

an overlapping category with skilled labour and family migration, in which study or skills acquisition both before and during migration, is quite essential, not only for students but for all types of migration. Instead, a pursuit of knowledge has been central to the choice and motivations of students, which separate study migration from other types of migration e.g. family or skilled migration. Despite this overlap, the ambiguity in dealing with cross-border mobility or migration of students and use of various terms remains a challenge. Likewise, data sources on international student mobility are limited and mainly come from study destinations and organisations like the OECD or UNESCO. Therefore, the disparity in the definitions and measurements of international student mobility, which differ from one country to another, distort the universal picture of international student mobility (Guruz, 2011). Scholars and policy makers have used terms ‘migration’ and ‘mobility’ interchangeably to define international students for diverse purposes. On the one hand, policies of western countries take an instrumental inclusion-exclusion approach to recognising international students from other migrant categories, to govern domestic and international policies (Guruz, 2011; OECD, 2014). In doing so, foreign students, overseas students, student migrants and international students have been used in the literature to discuss ‘student migration’. The use of term ‘migration’ in policies offers objective grounds to deal with the cross-border movement of students and their future settlement in their destinations as well as to control their entry. By contrast, academic scholars were keen to explore the personal experiences of students in destination and in doing so they have uncovered a range of issues and challenges that international students often face in their daily life in destinations. In such discussion, the term ‘student mobility’ has been used to underline mobility experiences and social cultural change taking place through study abroad. Beyond this migration-mobility nexus, recent attempts to recognise the emerging role and identities of students before, during, and after study abroad have opened up new horizons in the study of international students and the prospects of their foreign education in 21<sup>st</sup> century. This approach investigates multiple roles of international students as a family member, a paid term-time worker, a nationalist, a prospective immigrant and a global citizen in the making, (King, 2010; Raghuram, 2013:140).

The term ‘migration’ or ‘mobility’ has been used interchangeably in the literature. However, when it comes to policy making, changes in terminology can significantly affect the way in which international students are treated. The UK, for example, has recently politicised international students by adopting a UN definition to recognise them as ‘migrants’. The United Nations defines a student migrant as someone who remains outside

their country of origin or citizenship, for education, for a prolonged period, e.g. one year or more (Cavanaugh and Glennie, 2012). Alternatively, UNESCO defines ‘internationally mobile students’ using three elements: ‘*citizenship, permanent residency and prior education*’. These elements distinguish internationally mobile students from students who are taking part in distance learning, offshore education, or in a short exchange program of one year or less (Guruz, 2011:161). The OECD considers ‘individuals with prior education back home or elsewhere, who leave their country of origin and travel to another for the purpose of study’ to be international or mobile students (OECD, 2014:352). Furthermore, additional variables that are used to determine trends and patterns of mobility amongst students include the length, type, level, and subjects of study. Examples include credit mobility (to undertake part of a course abroad), degree mobility (mobility for an entire course), and short-term mobile students (King, 2010; King and Raghuram, 2013; Rivza and Theichler, 2007; King, Findlay, and Ahrens, 2010). In this vein, it is fair to say that student mobility or migration is still a developing field of investigation. However, this study follows King and Raghuram (2013:129) in adopting the term ‘student mobility’ to refer to the movement, embedded in the migration process, rather than migration itself. This view enables the study to examine students’ mobility experiences without necessarily avoiding the sending and receiving country's perspective. The forthcoming discussion aims to review existing literature to understand the student mobilities from South Asia to the UK. In doing so, the supply and demand side of Western education has been used to demonstrate the dominant patterns of student mobilities worldwide and the knowledge driven trade off between suppliers and buyers of western education.

### 1.3- THE SUPPLY-DEMAND OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND STUDENT MOBILITIES

Scholars travelling a long distance to seek knowledge and wisdom have become a part of the history of many countries. Historically, students from colonised countries could be seen studying and learning in the country of the colonial powers, some of whom later some went on to lead mass movements, in the global south, for freedom and social change (Madge, Raghuram and Noxell, 2009; King and Raghuram, 2013). More recently, international student mobility (ISM) has become a major phenomenon. Scholars associate student mobilities with globalisation, the global spread of education, and neoliberal interests in harvesting wealth from the fast growing international education market. In doing so, national policies are framed and designed to attract international students and

retain the best and brightest to benefit from the knowledge economy. International education, therefore, is seen to have become a commodity to supply desired knowledge and skills, in knowledge producing, developed nations. In contrast, the demand for western education increases in the global south as a result of the desire to benefit from the knowledge economy as well as to achieve social distinction. These two coinciding supply and demand sides of educational services and products provide a more inclusive frame of reference to understand student mobilities and their experiences in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Previously, scholars used the push-pull model to explain casual relationships of factors shaping student mobility patterns between sending and receiving nations. In a similar manner, brain drain theories have been developed to recognise processes of gain or loss of skilled people which favour western developed nations. Student migration has been part of this skilled migration process for a long time (Raghuram, 2013). Despite the contributions of these models, scholars are now reluctant to use them in making sense of the ever-changing landscape of student migration and its social dynamics (Rizvi, 2005; Raghuram, 2013). Instead, the focus is now on knowledge production in the global north and consumption of this knowledge in the global south. This study follows the supply-demand perspective to make a broader distinction in the literature between 1) supply, control and dominance in managing international education, and 2) demand and use of international education for personal, social and economic advantages to reproduce social class privileges. In doing so, it explores the motivations behind the supply of higher education worldwide and its demand in the global South, particularly in South Asia. It also takes account of the role of ideologies e.g. neoliberalism, the nation state, and higher education institutions (HEIs) in trade and the service of education. This view coincides with the social demand side rationale that shapes the selectivity, flows of international student mobility, and propels its global trends.

### 1.3.1- THE SUPPLY SIDE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

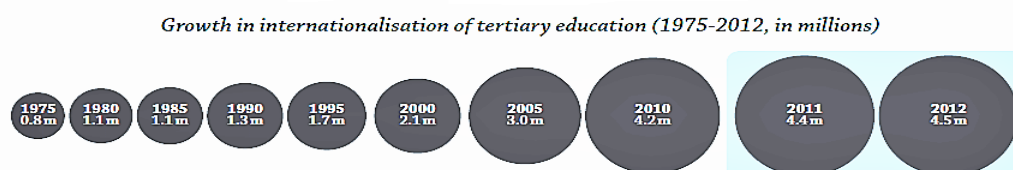
Scholars who are interested in the origins of the phenomenal growth of students moving abroad, primarily for education, tend to associate it with globalisation, the neoliberal growth of the knowledge economy, and the internationalisation of education. The emergence of the knowledge economy has always been at the heart of globalisation and embraced by a neoliberal ideology that has been a key to prioritising the market well beyond individuals, society, and even the nation-state. Developed countries began to withdraw financial support for education, systematically, in response to neoliberal

challenges, and encouraged HEIs to seek and develop a strategic approach to secure national interests in knowledge capitalism (Varghese, 2008; De Wit, 2011; Sidhu, 2011; Olseen and Peters, 2005). This, it was said, could be achieved by meeting the demands of the market and through commercial engagement with industry. This development then led to a more competitive international market in which educational services, goods and people are moving through, both geographically and virtually. The neoliberal approach is used to produce knowledge, material wealth, and new methods of knowledge sharing, teaching and academic participation. This shift is referred to in the literature as the ‘internationalisation of higher education’ (Brooks, Fuller and Waters, 2012), which directly contributes to the worldwide growth of international students. The internationalisation of education refers to policies, practices, and strategies that facilitate the fluidity of teaching and learning across time and space in all sorts of forms, including physical and virtual. It ranges from the geographical mobility of students to the delivery of education at home using international collaboration, branch campuses, or online courses. The primary motivation behind facilitating internationalisation of education has been financing the education sector, promoting knowledge capitalism using English, attracting the best and brightest students to strengthen their knowledge production and securing national interests in a competitive labour market. Varghese (2008) suggests that the internationalisation of education coincided with a gradual decline in state support to HEIs in the 1980s, but with an increasing expectation to preserve national interests by engaging with industry and resourcing finance from abroad in exchange for internationalised education (Guruz, 2011). In this regard, state policies and the role of HEIs in the western world are particularly noticeable where increasing pressure is placed on HEIs to accommodate the demand of the market and outsource finance through means of trade in educational goods and services, in particular by recruiting talent from abroad. As a result, HEIs became an entrepreneurial entity, trading educational services and their products worldwide through a robust marketing strategy, branding process and world ranking. However, there are claims of unexpected outcomes and the weakening of the currency of western education due to a commercial approach to turn education into commodity which contributes to credential inflation and affects the employability of foreign degrees (Knight, 2012; De Wit, 2011; Altbach and Knight, 2007 and Waters, 2012a and 2012b; Owton, 2011; Tomlinson, 2008; Leung and Waters, 2013; 2013a & 2013b). Also, De Wit (2011) and Altbach and Knight (2007) explain a number of myths and uncertainties around internationalisation while Adnett (2010) reassesses global income inequality as a result of student mobility from the global south to developed countries. Nonetheless, due to state

policies and the role of HEIs in western countries, student mobilities have become a global phenomenon.

The majority of data and studies have emerged in developed countries primarily, to regulate, monitor, and promote the global higher education market resulting in an ever-increasing literature. Despite this, the main approach to understanding the flow and current state of international students has been limited to statistical interpretations. This trend is not only limited to recognising the changing patterns of ISM but, to a large extent, could also be seen as rooted in the theorization of the social demand side of ISM (Findlay, 2011; Findlay et.al., 2012; Waters, 2008; Brooks and Waters, 2011b). Ironically, on both sides, special attention has been paid to international student mobility from and between OECD countries (Horizontal) at the global level, and few studies have discussed ISM in the global south. Similar to the previous studies by Varghese, 2008; Bhandari and Blumenthal, 2011, this study uses the latest estimations from OECD and UNESCO to understand student mobility trends, yet given the disparities discussed here; these trends should be considered approximate rather than absolute. According to OECD and UNESCO over 4.5 million students had been studying outside of their country of citizenship in 2012 and were hosted by the top leading destinations, mainly in the US (16%) and the UK (13%) (OECD, 2014:345). Around 82% of these students were enrolled in G20 countries, while 75% of all international students were enrolled in OECD countries (OECD, 2014:342). The OECD estimations, described below, demonstrate an expanding trend in the global higher education market, which is likely to continue (Adnett, 2010).


Figure 1-LONG TERM GROWTH OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' NUMBER



Source: OECD and UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

Data on foreign enrolment worldwide comes from both the OECD and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). UIS provided the data on all countries for 1975-95 and most of the non-OECD countries for 2000, 2005, 2010, 2011 and 2012. The OECD provided the data on OECD countries and other non-OECD economies in 2000 and 2012. Both sources use similar definitions, thus making their combination possible. Missing data were imputed with the closest data reports to ensure that breaks in data coverage do not result in breaks in time series.

The data points in the shaded area correspond to a different time scale than the rest of the time series but are presented for information as they are the last two years available, and 2012 is the year of reference.

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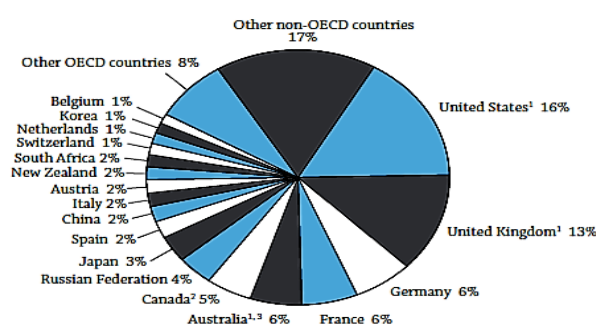
Source- OECD, 2014, (See Box C4.1:344)



As per the OECD estimates for 2012, since 1975 the growth of students who were enrolled outside their country of citizenship has increased fivefold. The G20 and OECD countries have been receiving ISM in ever-increasing numbers over the past two decades. However, the flows of students around the world have been uneven, inconsistent, although largely favouring English-speaking destinations. The global trends of student mobilities seem to divide the world between receiving- the global north- and sending- the global south- countries. Rivza and Theichler have termed these mobility trends as horizontal and vertical student mobility (Rivza and Theichler, 2007). Student flows between developed nations are recognised as horizontal mobility (North to North) and largely come in the form of credit mobility (e.g. the ERASMUS scheme). By contrast, student flows from developing nations, particularly from Asia, to developed nations are termed as a vertical mobility (South to North) pattern and are largely 'degree' mobility. Vertical student mobility predominantly favours English-speaking countries regardless of their variable fee structure. The US, the UK, and Australia, for example, charge higher fees to international students than their European counterparts such as France or Germany, which offer more affordable fee options (Guruz, 2011). Also, country wise the US followed by the UK has been dominating the fastest growing and the ever-competitive education market for decades. Despite the rise of some regional educational providers offering cost-effective education, who have started shaking the world ranking of HEIs by making their way up in the global rankings and challenging traditional leaders in the global education market, the US and the UK continue to dominate as the top study destinations.

Figure 2-DISTRIBUTION OF FOREIGN STUDENTS IN TERTIARY EDUCATION BY DESTINATION (2012)

*Percentage of foreign tertiary students reported to the OECD who are enrolled in each country of destination*



1. Data related to international students is defined on the basis of their country of residence.

2. Year of reference 2011.

3. Student stocks are derived from different sources and therefore results are indicative only.

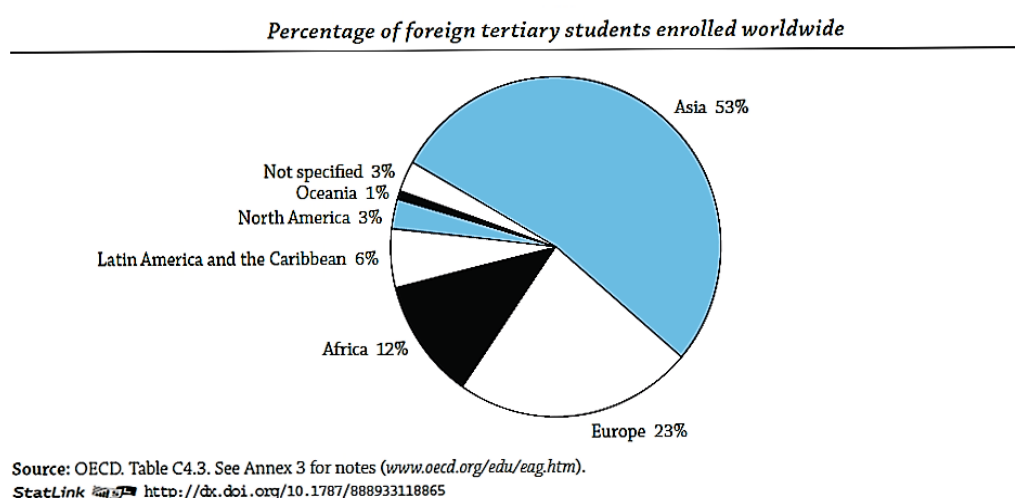
Source: OECD, Table C4.4 and Table C4.7, available on line. See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm)).

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933118808>

Source- OECD, 2014, (See Chart C4.2:345)

For supplying most of the international students, the credit goes to Asia, in particular, to China and India. These two countries have been sending students to almost all destinations, but still seem to favour those that are English speaking. A comprehensive account of the sending countries has been given by Guruz (2011), OECD (2015) and Bhandari and Blumenthal (2011) which reveals the scale and scope of flows from Asia to America, Europe and Australia. The flow of international students from Asia to English speaking destinations in the West, particularly to the US and the UK, normally dominates global ISM trends, as shown in the Figure below (OECD, 2014).

Figure 3-DISTRIBUTION OF FOREIGN STUDENTS IN TERTIARY EDUCATION BY REGION OF ORIGIN (2012)



Source- OECD, 2014, (See Chart C4.5:351)

Despite student mobility trends within Europe, which normally refers to a circular movement of students, the one-way trend, which ties top English speaking destinations with major source nations in Asia, has existed for a long time. There are factors that have shaped these long lasting student mobility trends and discussed in the push-pull model. The pull factors broadly include the colonial connection, cultural proximity, political and economic systems that follow former imperial powers, social and legal recognition of qualifications, employment and immigration opportunities, along with world reputation and strong hold in the knowledge economy. Selectively, these factors were a major influence in mobility decisions that tend to favour western education. Push factors that influence students to go abroad include a lack of quality education and capacity problems in their home country HEIs, the social-political environment, and employment and security issues. Scholars have also gathered evidence to explore the demand for foreign education

for its social dynamics and its role in producing social class privileges (King, Findlay and Ahrens, 2010; Waters, 2008; Leung, 2013). Apart from this, additional, emerging factors that help students decide where to go include the cost of education, diaspora connections, employment during and after studies, affordability, and the ease of visa formalities (Varghese, 2008; Sidhu, 2011).

To summarise, international student mobility flows are predominantly associated with the channelling of the 'knowledge producer' in the global north with the 'knowledge consumer' countries in the global south. Many regimes of international student mobility exist and function simultaneously, though it is the vertical rather than the horizontal mobility that most influences the political, economic, and social landscape of sending and receiving countries. As a matter of empirical fact, international student mobility tends to grow continuously without necessarily polarising sending and receiving countries. However, market forces, globalisation processes, and internationalisation tend to intensify competition for international students thus, as regional powers occupy their space in global the positioning, a more even distribution of the student population is likely to emerge soon. Despite these hopes, current patterns of international student mobility flows suggest that a relatively skewed student mobility pattern is going to continue favouring the so-called world-class education in the west for the foreseeable future. Crucially, the lack of data on student mobility in the global south is another obstacle to recognising more local patterns of cross-border student mobility.

The supply-side vision of international student mobility has been tremendously important due to its role in establishing cross-border student mobility as a phenomenon by providing robust datasets of students' international flows, and the role of state policies that make it happen. Furthermore, it has furnished evidence of the uneven growth of, and western dominance in, international student mobility. However, there are many serious weaknesses in the supply side analysis of student migration. It does not reflect the social processes and personal experiences of students, and how a change in access to, or supply of international education affects choices and selectivity in the decisions of millions of families in the global South. The supply side does not question why people pursue education abroad and with what expectations. The demand side literature of international student mobility tends to fill this gap.

### 1.3.2- THE DEMAND SIDE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

The demand side literature of ISM covers three broader areas. The first of these is student migration and research concerning mobility experiences and migratory process. The second focuses on the employability of western education and outcome related issues, market entry into education, and its effect on the outcomes of foreign degrees. The third area of attention examines pedagogic responsibilities and the challenges in making the study abroad experiences of international students, worthwhile (Madge, Raghuram and Noxolo, 2009). The centre of the discussion, however, has been the motivations and experiences of students and their families pursuing advantages in globalising education along with the impact of internationalising education on social stratification, widening inequality, and the changing dynamics of the education-employment Nexus across time and space. In doing so, scholars tend to understand the manifestation of mobility experiences and social demand for international education by looking at the aspirations of middle-class families to reproduce social class privileges. These attempts go as far as to discover new ways of understanding the students' learning difficulties in adjusting and adopting new cultural codes, both in academic and social life. In addition, student experiences of victimisation and vulnerability, anti-migration challenges, and the intensifying expectations from the student to take responsibility for becoming employable, are becoming part of the ongoing academic research. In this vein, scholars are encouraged to go beyond existing theoretical lenses to examine study abroad experiences and explore the new territory of the multidimensional life of an international student on the move. Following this path, Parvati Raghuram (2009 and 2013), Russell King (2010 and 2013), Allan Findlay (2011), Johanna Waters (2002, 2003, 2005, 2006a , 2006b, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2012a , 2012b and 2015) and Rachel Brookes (2008 and 2012) and other scholars (e.g. Sin, 2009, 2013a, 2013b; Leung, 2013 and Xue, 2008) have been attempting to distinguish student migration from labour or family migration by reminding us of the multiple identities of student migrants, including a family members, political activists, mobile talent, citizens and paid workers at the same time. They urge researchers to explore student life in pursuit of knowledge, skills acquisition and building a successful migrant profile through international education rather than focus on migration. In this direction, scholars have sought to conceptualise advantages of cross-border educational mobility symbolised in types of capital; cultural, social and economic capitals (Bourdieu, 1986). Consequently, literature employing these concepts to explore student life in destination countries is mounting and we are beginning to understand the different dimensions of

student migration as it continues to grow. Following this development, Brooks and Waters (2012), Findlay (2011), King and others (e.g. Sin, 2013a and 2013b; Leung, 2013) have contributed to our understanding of the costs and benefits of international mobilities for education, middle class strategic response to challenges in accessing elite professions and the ways in which advantages through international education are produced and utilised. Chapter 2 provides an evidence-based discussion to understand the social demand for western style international education. In addition, a range of studies have added to our understanding of the mobility experiences of students during and after study abroad, personal development, and capital formation, cross-cultural positive and negative influences over students' self and their achievements. In line with this, a large amount of work has been done to explore pedagogic issues relating to students' progress and adjustment in achieving success at foreign universities. The findings of these studies normally refer to problems and challenges associated with adjustments and adoption of foreign culture and academic style, loneliness and social psychological and health problems that students normally face and their studies get affected by such troubling experiences. The literature relating to student migration normally focus on students' safety and victimisation, their vulnerability in labour market and racial abuse in destinations. However, some of the evidence contrasts with social demand theory, which underlines students' motives for migration through study abroad and then making use of mobility experiences or foreign capital to improve career prospects back home. To summarise, demand side literature reflects the individual experiences of international students, the motives behind taking part in globalising education and the ways in which students and their families have perceived benefit from western education. In order to secure advantages in international education, students and their families prepare themselves to go through a life-changing transition, and their personal experiences of this transition contribute to the literature representing demand side analysis of international education.

#### 1.4- INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY WITHIN AND FROM SOUTH ASIA

South Asian countries, formally known as 'South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation' (SAARC) are recognised as a major source of international students due to their huge contribution to ISM worldwide (OECD, 2014; UIS, 2016; Guruz, 2011). South Asia has been producing a significant demand for international education, therefore sending students to top destinations, in ever-increasing numbers and constantly helping develop a

lucrative global market for education. Regardless of little evidence, a closer look at the ISM pattern in South Asia reveals an unknown step migratory process, in which a strong inclination to send students towards English speaking western destinations dominates the ISM global pattern. This global pattern then, combined with regional trends of horizontal student mobility facilitates migration to western destinations among students who are coming from small and problematic nations. The coming discussion explains the student mobility patterns within and from South Asia and its contribution in student migration to the UK.

#### 1.4.1- STUDENT MOBILITY WITHIN SOUTH ASIA

The ISM in and from South Asia is considered to be one-way flow, mainly vertical, to top western destinations, but when it comes to regional character, it is horizontal, more directed towards regional educational hubs e.g. India, and is quite similar to the regional pattern of ISM in Europe. The ISM patterns from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are predominantly outbound towards western destinations, especially to the US, the UK, and Australia, as well as to each other regionally, but in limited numbers. By contrast, students from small nations, e.g. Nepal, use the neighbouring country to attend technical education close to home and, later, as launching pad to progress to a global destination for higher education (Khadria, 2008; Anthias and Siddiqui, 2008; Mukherjee and Chanda, 2012). India, as a major player in the region, is the biggest source country, after China, to send students to almost all continents, as well as to receive students from neighbours (Khadria, 2008 & 2012). The top destinations for Indian students are OECD countries, especially the US, the UK, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Germany, and France (Government of India and UNESCO<sup>1</sup>, 2014; Dongaonkar & Negi, 2009 and Guruz, 2011). Pakistan stands as the second largest source in the region, with the total outbound number of 37579 students, mainly to the UK (7154), but also to Australia (4751), US (4567), Saudi Arabia (3651), UAE (3263), Malaysia (2132) and Germany (1767) (UIS, 2016). According to UKCISA (2012) and HESA (2015), Pakistan ranked eight in the top ten countries sending students to the UK (Home Affairs Committee, 2011). Bangladesh, with a total outbound mobility of 24112 students, represents patterns of ISM similar to Pakistan. The top 5 destinations for Bangladeshi students were the UK (4204), the US (3664), Australia

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<sup>1</sup> Figures are presented in an official report published by government of India with the help of UNESCO, New Delhi titled- '*STATUS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN INDIA FOR HIGHER EDUCATION*'. The figures are total numbers of students to the corresponding country as of 2012.

(3603), Malaysia (2033) and Canada (1530). Likewise, Sri Lanka has been sending students to English-speaking destinations with a total 16,030 outbound students. The top 5 destinations among Sri Lankans were Australia (3950), the UK (2933), the US (2915), India (1115) and Malaysia (1088) (UIS, 2016). In contrast, Sri Lanka hosted only 816 students, mainly from Myanmar (259), Bhutan (167), Maldives (83), China (66), and Bangladesh (49). Unfortunately, reliable data on inbound mobility in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and the Maldives are unavailable in UIS (2016) data sets.

Table 1- INTERNATIONALLY MOBILE STUDENTS FROM SAARC REGION IN 2011-12

Country of origin	Destination countries							
	% in India	% in United States	% in United Kingdom	% in Australia	% in Canada	Total % in USA,UK, Australia & Canada	% in other countries	Total students studying abroad in absolute terms
Afghanistan	16.3	03.6	02.1	01.1	0.7	07.5	76.2	9754
Bangladesh	02.4	14.6	17.4	15.2	6.0	53.2	44.4	21927
Bhutan	71.3	03.0	0.6	11.5	0.9	16.0	12.7	3186
Maldives	14.1	01.5	07.1	11.1	0.4	20.1	65.8	1862
Nepal	18.7	31.9	05.5	21.8	0.4	59.6	21.7	29184
Pakistan	*	11.7	23.1	09.9	5.0	49.7	50.3	37962
Sri Lanka	07.0	17.3	21.6	21.1	0.9	60.9	32.1	16204

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)

\*: Insignificant

-: Zero

Source: Government of India and UNESCO report, (2014:7)

In contrast, other small South Asian countries, e.g. Nepal and Bhutan, are having a problem sending students to leading study destinations directly. According to Bhattarai (2011), Nepali students went to approximately 70 countries, primarily to the US, the UK and Australia while regionally, Bangladesh (1285), India (947), Pakistan (140) attracted them, and in total 62,391 Nepali students went abroad to pursue their studies up until 2011(Bhattarai, 2011). Nepali students also seem to choose Cyprus, Poland, Slovakia, Taiwan, Turkey, Spain, and Costa Rica as new destinations, yet their numbers remained limited. Similarly, most of the Bhutanese students favour India (total 3329 students), Bangladesh, Nepal, Philippines, the UK, Thailand and the USA (total 29 students) with limited numbers of students studying in Australia on a scholarship. However, Bhutan is facing problems in sending more students abroad for knowledge acquisition (Adler, 2009; Wangyal, 2001; Dorji and Kinga, 2013; Government of India and UNESCO, 2014). Afghanistan and Maldives have sent a small number of students to leading destinations, particularly to the UK, India and other destinations (Home Affairs committee, 2011,

Dongaonkar & Negi, 2009 and Government of India and UNESCO, 2014). Small and atypical geographical landscapes; the weakening position of the welfare state caused by various conflicts, and incapable education systems are the main barriers in Bhutan, Afghanistan, Nepal and the Maldives are responsible for the problematic trend of student mobilities from these nations. The political and economic circumstances of small nations limit the possibility to facilitate student mobilities globally, but regional and local opportunities are vital to be used in achieving international mobilities. In fact, only a small proportion of students from these countries can afford to visit global destinations, and the majority of them struggle to fund their study abroad (Khadria, 2008). As a possible solution to this problem, as regional trends suggest, small countries with the little capacity to accommodate the demand of quality education tend to send students to regional locations rather than to top destinations. Though the concentration of these students seems to be limited to technical and professional qualification at UG level, for example, in India, this significantly reduces at PG and research level (Government of India, 2014). So far, scholars do not recognise the importance of these regional trends. These regional flows of students within South Asia, which I call 'step migration', help us understand the role of India as a stepping-stone in providing better education to students coming from neighbouring nations, who then, in many cases, move to the western destination. As well as offer an insight into the process in which student migration in South Asian nations other than big economies (i.e. India or Pakistan) are shaped. A detailed discussion on step migration and findings of this study is presented in chapter 4 and 5.

International students from South Asia constitute a large part of the Non-EU student body in the UK, partly due to a long colonial British legacy, the strong presence of a South Asian diaspora and targeted British policy initiatives (PMI 1 & 2) which have led to a dramatic increase in students from South Asia (Findlay, 2011; Mulley and Sachrajda, 2011; Khadria, 2008). In fact, South Asia had been sending students to the UK in ever increasing numbers, which suddenly started to fall following 'student migration' reforms in 2010 (Home Affairs Committee, 2011:86, Business, innovation and skills committee, 2012; Universities UK, 2011). All South Asian source nations have experienced decline regardless of the size of the nation (Home affairs committee, 2011:86). The trends of reduced student mobility have continued for India (29900, 22385, 19750 between 2011/12 and 2013/14) and Pakistan (8820, 7185, 6665 between 2011/12 and 2013/14) despite their recognition as major source nations for the UK (HESA, 2015). See Table 2 for the country wise trend of decline in numbers choosing to study in the UK.



Table 2- ALLOCATION OF STUDENT VISAS FOR THE UK TO SOUTH ASIAN DOMICILE 2005-10

South Asian countries	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
India	16592	20579	22018	27871	58158	42545	<b>1,87,763</b>
Pakistan	8639	11517	10426	7960	12657	24485	<b>75,684</b>
Bangladesh	2961	3375	3445	3313	17449	8989	<b>39,530</b>
Sri Lanka	1779	2374	2503	3309	5546	7583	<b>23,094</b>
Nepal	405	791	1114	581	10104	2333	<b>15,328</b>
Afghanistan	67	101	91	99	172	354	<b>884</b>
Maldives	78	94	75	83	51	69	<b>450</b>
Bhutan	15	16	17	09	22	19	<b>98</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>30536</b>	<b>38847</b>	<b>39687</b>	<b>43225</b>	<b>104159</b>	<b>86377</b>	<b>342831</b>

Source: Student visas (Home affairs committee, 2011), Appendix 4, page 86

The UK, which used to be one of the top destinations in South Asia, has experienced a sudden reduction in inflows (University UK, 2011 and 2014; HAC, 2011; BIS, 2012; Cavanaugh and Glennie, 2012; Home Affairs Committee, 2011). The lack of reliable data prevents us from knowing the reality of such dramatic changes. However, this shift in ISM patterns has presented student mobilities from South Asian as a case in the UK, both as a part of the emerging, unwelcoming image of Britain for Non-EU students and a potential case of problematic access to world-class British education among South Asian. A detailed account of country wise factors shaping student mobility and trends of step migration is discussed in chapter 4 and 5.

#### 1.4.2- STUDENT MOBILITY BETWEEN SOUTH ASIA AND THE UK

One particular trend of student migration worth exploring has been between the UK and South Asia. It is also in the interests of this study to explore this interdependence as it reminds us of the intensifying desire of the knowledge driven, the neoliberal trade-off between internationalising British education and student mobility from South Asia. This dependency grew stronger in the wake of aggressive British policies to press British HEIs to be a part of neoliberal national agendas with ever-increasing expectations from it to offset financial sourcing by trading education abroad, in particular with the global south. Unlike the US, the UK strategically developed an educational brand and marketing approach, and deployed British councils and organisations, alike, to market and create a

brand for British higher education. Furthermore, British policy initiatives, such as Prime Minister's initiatives 1 and 2, to attract international students in the UK are worthy of particular reference. The UK has been keen to utilise the advantages of the European Bologna process, but the international market for education and full fee paying overseas students has been central to British policy-making ever since (King, Findlay and Ahrens, 2010; Bhandari and Blumenthal, 2011; Guruz, 2011; Naidoo, 2007). As a result, the UK has become the second most popular destination in the world for international students after the US, and the most popular destination in the South Asian region. South Asia has been sending students to the UK in ever-increasing numbers up until 2010. To make it happen, British policies have been systematically shaping educational spaces in which British higher education eventually relied on international buyers coming from Non-EU nations, particularly from Asia. International students from South Asia constitute a large part of the Non-EU student body in the UK, partly due to a long colonial, British legacy, the strong presence of a South Asian Diaspora and targeted British policy initiatives (PMI 1 & 2) which led to a dramatic increase in students from South Asia (Findlay et.al., 2012; Mulley and Sachrajda, 2011; Khadria, 2008).

Our current understanding of ISM between South Asia and the UK comes from varied sources. This includes individual scholarly inputs and official literature; however, these sources are limited in many ways. The noticeable academic contribution has been from Khadria, 2008, Anthias and Siddiqui, 2008, Kell and Vogt, 2010; Bhattarai, 2011; Bass, 2014; Sondhi, 2013; Mukherjee and Chanda, 2012; Dongaonkar and Negi, 2009; Misra, 2012; Kumar and Alexander, 2010. Similarly, useful official publications come from public bodies, governments and international organisations promoting student mobility (e.g, Govt of India and UNESCO, 2014; Nepal migration yearbook 2010, 2011; Khadria, 2008; OECD, 2015; UNESCO Institute of Statistics; Higher education statistical agency-UK). Internationally, UNESCO and OECD gather data to understand international student mobility patterns, total volume, and segments of ISM worldwide, as well as to the UK. Alongside this, scholars (e.g. Bhandari and Blumenthal, 2011; Sidhu, 2011 and 2012; Naidoo, 2007; Rizva and Theichler, 2007; Waters, 2008; Brooks and Waters, 2011b; Guruz, 2011; Marginson et. al, 2010; Raghuram, 2013, King, Findlay and Ahrens, 2010 and King and Raghuram, 2013) have independently contributed to our understanding of global trends and trajectories of student migration, including to the UK. However, the majority of the literature is generated from the political debates around student migration to the UK and changing British policies to control it. In particular, studies by UKBA

(2009; 2010a & 2010b), Universities UK (2011), British Council (2014) are published as a part of ongoing changes in the students visa regime, and empirical studies by UKCISA (2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2011, and 2012), and UKCOSA (2004, 2006) have sought to understand the experiences of international students coming to the UK. Although the scope of these studies was limited to visa issues and experiences of applying or extending visas, we do get a sense of student life and the costs and benefits of student migration to the UK. However, the studies do not differentiate South Asian from the rest of the international student community. In addition, public reports, e.g. Home Affairs Committee, 2011 and 2012; Committee of Public Accounts, 2012; Business Innovation and Skills Committee, 2009; 2012 and Scottish Affairs Committee, 2011, have been of particular significance as they tend to focus on the contributions of international students to the UK, beyond financial means, as well as raising concern over the unusual trend in declining numbers of ISM from South Asia (Home Affairs Committee, 2011:86). Further to this, independent studies by Mulley and Sachrajda (2011), Cavanaugh and Glennie (2012), Milligan et.al. (2011) and Blinder, (2011) challenge the view and use of student migration trends in the UK by highlighting the various strengths and weakness of the data sources. Despite highlighting the current volume, segmentation, and groups affected by visa reforms in the UK, the general tendency in these studies has been to consider South Asian international students as an integral part of a Non-EU cohort from Asia. Likewise, the discussion remains biased as it focused only on the supply side of migration and appeared to care about British HEIs and ignore the effects on student community.

The UK, as a leading destination, has been a particular focus of these investigations due both to its success story in providing quality education worldwide and the impact it is having on students' experiences and prospects. In taking this focus, organisations and scholars have sought to understand how British higher education is produced, consumed, and utilised. The experiences of international students, as a typical buyer of British education, constitute a large part of this literature. Despite the growth of literature on international students in the UK, students from South Asia often found themselves left behind in scholarly discussion. I argue that many studies have emerged as an important source of understanding of the experiences of Chinese (Yang, 2008; Tian, 2008; Gu, Schweinfurt and Day, 2010; Wang, 2010; Xiong, 2005 and Xue, 2008), Japanese (Ayano, 2006), Thai (Tarry, 2008; Nomania, 2008), and East Asian (Wu and Hammond, 2011; Durkin, 2008) and other Asian groups, but South Asian groups, who are presented in the media as becoming a problematic group in the UK, are not discussed so much in academic

circles. This is surprising as this group, in fact, has been a large subset of international students from Asia and a major source of international student mobility to the UK.

Based on the available information, student migrants from South Asia in the UK have been discussed as a subset of an Asian student body rather than considering them as a unique group distinct from other Asian student migrants. The perceived homogeneity of South Asian students limits the possibility of knowing the particular nature and dynamics of the ISM from South Asia. Unlike before, the experiences of these students have started to attract media and scholarly attention due to declining numbers and are claimed to be affected by immigration reforms. Only a small number of South Asian countries have been able to document mobility trends or the experiences of South Asian students coming to the UK; these include India, Bangladesh, and Nepal. Despite a large number of students coming from Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Afghanistan, data on these groups are missing. Moreover, available information on student migration from South Asia is superficial and limited to mobility trends. There is less, or no attempt whatsoever, to recognise and understand the social demands for British education among South Asian students. Following this, Mukherjee and Chanda (2012); the Government of India (2014) and Dongaonker and Negi (2009) contribute to the understanding of international student mobility patterns in and from India, while Misra (2012) discusses the internationalisation agenda of India, which aims to reduce international student mobility from India and active participation in educational export to other nations. Gopinath (2014) conceptualises the ways in which students exercise choice to pursue international education abroad or at home while Rajan and Wadhawan (2014) and Rutten and Verstappen (2012) capture the contradictory mobility experience among Indian youths in London. Away from India, Bhattarai (2009 & 2011) perceives student migration from Nepal as beneficial but problematic, and Anthias and Siddiqui (2008) analyses ISM and the experiences of Bangladeshi students in the UK. Unlike in the UK, the experiences of Indian students have been recently investigated in Australia and Canada. Australia attracted much media and scholarly attention due to the racial violence and security threats to Indian students (Marginson, 2010, Bass, 2009), their experiences of migration and cross culture transition (Bass, 2006, 2009, 2014; Robertson & Runganaikaloo, 2013; Sidhu, 2011), and the common practice of term-time work engagement among international students (Nyland, Mewett, Marginson, Ramia, Sawir and Smith, 2009; Bass, 2006, 2009 & 2014; Singh, 2011). The international student community in Australia has been discussed with regard to the study-migration nexus, barriers to multiculturalism and problems of integration into

Australian society, along with as the idea that student migrants are considered as a cash cow, rather than as future citizens. Not quite the same, but the study of Indian international students in Canada and the US has helped scholars understand the gender relations of ISM (Sondhi, 2013 & 2015) and student mobility experiences in the US (Mukthyala, 2013). It is noticeable that other countries in South Asia have received less attention than Indian students, mainly due to the latter's significant presence in almost all destinations.

By contrast, most of our knowledge of international students in the UK, including those of from South Asia, has been related to cross culture transitions, culture shock, the adjustment process, challenges to academic progress and their coping strategies (e.g. Brown and Holloway, 2008; Ashikaga 2010; Walsh, 2010; Schartner, 2015; GU, Schweisfurth and Day, 2010; Andrade, 2006; Luzio-Lockett, 1998). There are claims that only increased support and integration seems to be making the adjustment process easier, and that this should be a priority for institutions (McDonald's, 2014; Ramchandran, 2011; Lillyman and Bennet, 2014). Scholarly discussion often goes further and recognises patterns of stereotyping foreign learners (Tain, 2008; Ninnes, Altchison and Kalos, 1999; Le ha, 2006), identifies typical learning and performance issues (Wang and Li, 2011; Goode, 2007; Morrison, Merrick, Higgs and Metais, 2005; Lebcir, Wells and Bond, 2008) and a lack of critical thinking and academic writing ability (Wu, 2008), along with a failure to adopt and engage in western education (Brown, 2007a; Peacock and Harrison, 2009). All these are deeply associated with the personal ability of the student of being able to deal with and mediate different learning environment and styles. While this sounds negative, living and studying in different cultural settings frequently and routinely presents unexpected experiences for overseas students. Also, the social dimension of student life in a host society is often found to contrast to 'the dream' that students perceived before beginning their journey to academic excellence. The reality involves loss of social contact, loneliness and isolation as well as ethnically bounded friendships and social relations in the classroom. The above studies have coincided with a growing body of literature, which has tended to address emerging issues as being a result of the uneven impact of globalisation on higher education and international students. They focus on the impact on issues of pedagogic practices and outcomes related to challenges to the internationalisation of British HE, which tries to understand the social demand side of international education. This involves; the weakening currency of western education and employability issues relating to the value of educational credentials, (Wiers-Jenssen, 2008; Wiers-Jenssen and Try, 2005; Standing, 2011; Gibbs, 2001; Huang, 2013; Li, 2013; Boden and Neveda, 2010;

Tomlinson, 2008; Miller, 2010; Curtis-Tweed, 2004), unavoidable exposure to term-time work (Barron, Baum and Conway, 2009; Canny, 2002; Moreau and Leathwood, 2006; Metcalf, 2003; Callender, 2008; Standing, 2011) and experiences of racial attacks, violence and discrimination in British society (Brown and Jones, 2011; Krahe et al., 2005). In addition to this, media reports about treating overseas students in the UK as migrants, controlling their access to British HE by policy measures and breaking the link between study and post-study work opportunities in Britain, have raised questions about how welcome the international student community feels in the UK, following student visa restrictions. These studies do not contribute, sufficiently, to understanding the experiences of South Asian international students, which has been a major group subsumed under the common heading of 'Non-EU international students' in the UK and seem, particularly, to be suffering from these restrictions as ISM numbers from South Asia decline (HESA, 2015).

It is in the interest of this study to see what changes have occurred since the reforms took place as both higher education providers and overseas students are now facing tougher immigration criteria. On the one hand, HE providers are required to demonstrate trustworthiness and reliability in recruiting overseas students carefully, to check their linguistic competence and abilities, to vouch for students' academic progress, and to report cases in which abuse is taking place. On the other hand, Non-EU students seem to have been greatly affected by these measures, particularly about their study choices and preferences. Overseas students are now required to prove that they have stronger financial support and are able to demonstrate minimum levels of linguistic competence. They will have fewer work rights during term time and no access to work after graduation, except for those who are undertaking a PhD. Also, bringing dependents into the country has become more difficult. Students are required to pass credibility interviews and are obliged to leave the UK immediately after their education has concluded. The maximum length of stay has been set as five years for degree level students, with some exceptions, followed by fewer rights to appeal and to request administrative reviews on visa applications. This is all done to keep student movement temporary. Nonetheless, despite these controls and claims of the misuse of student immigration routes (UKBA, 2010a, 2010b; Committee Public Accounts, 2012), the contributions of international students to the UK economy and culture have been recognised. Nicola Dandridge (BIS, 2012:6) underlined their importance in these words:

‘The international student market brings tremendous benefits to the UK, not just economic benefits, but the tremendous cultural richness to our campuses, and also links that extend far beyond the international students' experiences

in the UK. They go back as an ambassador for the country and the impact of that has been immeasurable and invaluable.”

-Nicola Dandridge (BIS, 2012:6)

To summarise, international student mobility is now being treated as problematic in the UK, both by those who seek to control immigration of Non-EU students and by those who are against such control. Student migrants from South Asia attract much attention due to changes in mobility trends, which reflect the effects of a policy shift in the UK. This is despite a continuous student mobility trend linking demand for British education in South Asia and supply of ‘best and brightest’ students to the UK. After all, students of South Asian origin in British universities are underrepresented compared to other Asian groups, and this study has sought to contribute to the academic lacuna, which currently prevails.

### 1.5- CONCLUSION

Cross-border movement of students has become a new reality of 21<sup>st</sup> century in which people are moving across the world to secure advantages both in the labour market and in society through the pursuit of educational knowledge (Guruz, 2011; Bhandari and Blumenthal, 2011). This field of academic investigation is still taking shape, and new dimensions of study abroad are emerging. There is a lack of available, universal terms and concepts associated with student life to frame particular aspects of study abroad. However, the rapid use of ‘mobility’ is overtaking tendencies, which used to prefer migration and is underpinning a change in focus to think beyond rigid push-pull or Brain drain theories (Raghuram, 2009; Rizvi, 2005). This positive shift in focus towards recognising the realities of student life on the move is encouraging, as it allows us to personalise the mobility experiences of students without ignoring their ethnic, national, and cultural belongings. As a result, study abroad is no longer a matter of education alone but is coming to be considered a part of students’ aspirations to achieve social distinctions. In consequence, students’ participation in international education is resulting in new social divisions and reproducing social class advantage. These are discussed in coming chapters.

So far, we know there is western dominance in the supply of international education to the rest of the world and that it is becoming a part of the privileges in the global south where quality education is hard to access. The supply and demand side of international education represents a bi-polarised world where knowledge producer developed nations in the north strategically deploy education for economic and other gains. In contrast, the global south seems to benefit from knowledge consumption directly and through the human capital of

mobile students (Findlay, 2011; Sidhu, 2011). As Sidhu argued (2011), international student mobility (ISM) has been a success story for both suppliers and buyers of international education. There is an ever-increasing demand for international education in all parts of the world, and it is likely to continue in the coming years (Varghese, 2008). The bright side of ISM has been the dramatic change in the international education landscape by extending educational opportunities to an international level, witnessing new regional educational players competing with global HE giants and providing cost effective education to an ever-increasing student body. However, the western dominance in the global education market remains steadfast. In this light, ISM is no longer limited to supporting the host economy or HE but has emerged as one of the effective ways to attract the 'best and the brightest' students to advance the knowledge economy of destinations (Brown, Hesketh and William, 2004; Solimano, 2008). On the downside, it has also become a topic of controversy that includes debates which, on the one hand, relate to students' security, well-being (Marginson et.al., 2010; Nyland et.al. 2009; Kell and Vogt, 2010), precariousness (Standing, 2011), and problematic social life and, on the other hand, relate to immigration abuse and intensifying anti-migration feelings in the host society (Bass, 2009, 2012; Collins, 2006, 2013). Putting all of these factors together, it seems clear that student migration is now an area that we should be concerned about. Today is a difficult time to be an international student as globalising higher education still progresses unevenly, producing both advantages and disadvantages and, in part, student migration is treated as positive only when it is of benefit to the host society (King and Raghuram, 2013).

On the supply side of international education, there is much pressure on HEIs to deliver cutting-edge quality education to overseas clients, to accommodate changing policies, along with facing the challenges of ensuring employability in the ever-competitive labour market (Naidoo, 2006). British higher education has long been recognised for its world leading contribution to the global knowledge economy. Student migration in the UK, arguably, has been benefiting British HEIs, economy and culture. However, due to the latest visa reforms, which have, as claimed, put the welcoming image of Britain at risk among the international student community, the UK is a case study worthy of scholarly examination. As part of the supply-side explanation of student mobility, economic theories have failed to explain strong, linear, and persistent student mobility flows from South Asia to the UK. Despite the claims of credential inflation and commercialisation of British HE, we do not know why do South Asian students keep coming to Britain while other cost



effective European and other regional options are available? Scholars seem to find the answer to this question in demand-side theories of international education. The demand for international education is likely to grow due to the increasing dependency of middle-class families on foreign qualifications for their employability and positional advantages in the labour market and, in effect, leading to secure social class advantages (Findlay et.al, 2012). Students and their families in the global South i.e. Asia are pursuing western style education in Anglophone countries in ever-increasing numbers, thereby signifying the role of mobility, education, and employment in shaping the life of graduates with British credentials. Student mobility from South Asia to the UK is exceptional in this regard, in that it has experienced a decline recently (HESA, 2015). Given the apparent high demand for quality education among middle-class families in Asia, it is claimed that the declining trends are because of recent 'student visa' reforms which have affected many aspects of Non-EU students' mobility, education and employment in the UK (Mulley and Sachrajda, 2011; Blinder, 2011; Milligan et.al. 2011). Unlike before, student migration from South Asia is going through a change in which students are facing a new challenge abroad including racialisation in Australia (Bass, 2009, 2014) and part of the politics in the UK (BIS, 2012; Cavanaugh and Glennie, 2012). Given the current climate of difficult student life abroad, we have no idea what makes middle-class families in South Asia decide to send their children away for their higher education. Unfortunately, there is little reliable data available, which prevents us from appreciating the motives and aspirations of South Asian students for studying in the UK. Moreover, we do not know yet what the social dimensions of the mobilities of South Asian students are.

## 1.6- CONTRIBUTION

The chapter contributes empirically by highlighting how the scale and scope of international education and student mobility are becoming an essential part of globalising higher education. Despite the significance of an ever growing population of students, the current slippery interpretation that interchangeably uses the term ‘mobility’ and ‘migration’ to reflect cross border movement of students has been argued as outdated due to a growing literature which treats student mobility distinctively, separate from migration. The chapter then, helps us understand the global and regional trends of international student mobility, in particular between South Asia and the UK. It reveals a pattern in which the North-South polarisation between suppliers and buyers of international education combines with knowledge seeking students in the global South who obsessively follow knowledge producer HEIs in the global North. In this vein, the chapter highlights the lack of knowledge regarding student mobilities from South Asia to the UK, which is limited to statistical data and has been a part of the debate around skilled migration from South Asia (e.g. Raghuram 2009; Rajan and Wadhawan 2014) and immigration control in the UK. The mobility paradigm, which includes the social dynamics of globalising education (e.g. Findlay et. al. 2012; Brooks and Waters 2011b), is missing. The chapter makes a theoretical contribution to uncovering the inability of the push-pull model or Brain drain theory to explain the social demand for international education among South Asians; this has been revealed using the work of Bourdieu (1984, 1986) in other parts of the world, for example, by Waters (2008; 2006a and 2006b; 2012a) in Asia. Instead, a theory explaining the supply and demand of international education is highly relevant in explaining the family strategies and aspirations behind choosing study abroad rather than at home. In this vein, scholarly interpretation of student mobility from South Asia to the UK seems only partial due to their fact oriented and superficial approach; it lacks an understanding of the social aspirations of international students and their families, in choosing British education. The chapter recognises the importance of regional trend of ‘step migration’ in which nations in South Asia are using regional educational opportunities in order to prepare their bright students who later move to international study destinations. In this regard, the role of India as a ‘stepping-stone’ is highlighted.

## CHAPTER 2 - IN PURSUIT OF DISTINCTION: MOBILITY, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

## 2.1- INTRODUCTION

Social reproduction of class advantages (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) has been one of the most influential and sustained sociological theories to provide an analytical framework for understanding the role of education in reproducing class inequalities in modern societies. Since its arrival, the theory has inspired and equipped scholars with the theoretical tools to investigate power relations between class and how social inequality is reproduced over time in a given society. In doing so, the literature deals with the role of education and its outcomes in helping families to sustain, maintain, and reproduce their social status, class relations, and associated privileges. So far, despite some weaknesses, the contribution of this theory has been to illustrate the social demand side aspirations in the globalising of education. This is fruitful in some ways in so far as it reveals both the advantages and disadvantages of international education for its buyers. In this respect, the purpose of this chapter is to underline the theoretical grounds through which the experiences of the study cohort can be understood and explained. In addition, it attempts to underline the lack of scholarly attention given to South Asian international students in the British education system, despite their significant presence in international student mobilities in the UK. The scholarly attempts to study student flows from south Asia have been limited to conventional push-pull or Brain drain theories, which fail to provide an explanation of why people in South Asia choose international education, in particular, western style education, over cost effective and convenient study options at the domestic or regional level.

The chapter evaluates social reproduction theory applied to British higher education (HE) and its perceived role among South Asian families in (re)producing class advantages. It deals particularly, with the changing dynamics of the internationalisation of British HE in the context of neoliberal globalisation, together with the privileges that it tends to offer to its overseas clients, especially to those from Asia. It then goes on to examine the lack of understanding and social critique, of middle-class attitudes in South Asia towards British education and the potential use of British qualifications and academic achievements among South Asian students, to reproduce class advantages.

## 2.2- THE SOCIAL REPRODUCTION OF CLASS PRIVILEGES: THE THEORY AND ITS CONTRIBUTIONS

Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) has been a pioneer social thinker in the second half of the 20th century. He offers a radical perspective on understanding how the social world operates. It is clear that social order in a typical society seems to replicate itself and tend to reproduce class relations, which contributes to sustaining an unequal distribution of power in favour of the dominant classes in the society. As Bourdieu argued:

“Not only the ruling idea of the age has been the ideas of the ruling class, but also these ideas themselves enforce the rule of that particular class by legitimising themselves and concealing their basis in the power of ruling class”

(Bourdieu, 1990: xv)

To demonstrate how social and cultural reproduction takes place, he coined the concepts- *'forms of capital'*, *'Habitus'*, *'field'* and *'symbolic violence'*- together understood as *'the theory of social reproduction'* (Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu adopts a sophisticated view to illustrate the function and interplay of these concepts to explain the class struggle for a distinction that social classes seek to achieve, and (re)produce over time. He (Bourdieu, 1984; 1986; 1990) explains how the social order in society is maintained by imposing a certain cultural scheme, which legitimises itself through education in order to reproduce and sustain class distinctions that result in social inequality.

### 2.2.1- THE SOCIAL REPRODUCTION THEORY

Bourdieu suggests that there is an economy of cultural goods and it has a specific logic (Bourdieu, 1984). People pursue a fulfilling and satisfying state of being to give meaning to their lives. In this economy, things are produced and distributed unequally. Social agents, however, are not positioned in this space of struggle equally to compete to acquire and accumulate material and symbolic products for social domination and recognition. Some inherit a lot. Therefore, it becomes easy for them to accumulate; indeed, many of them are even free from the need to accumulate, while for other social agents it is hard to escape the struggle to accumulate class advantages. According to Bourdieu the pursuit of distinction by accumulating *'forms of capital'* become central to this struggle, while *'Habitus'* and *'field'* explains how these capitals are acquired and exercised by social agents. To explain this Bourdieu argued that:

"Different classes and class fractions are engaged in a symbolic struggle to impose the definition of the social world in conformity with their interests. The field of ideological positions reproduces in transfigured form the field of social positions. They may carry on this struggle, either directly in the symbolic conflicts of everyday life or indirectly through the struggle waged by the specialists in symbolic production. In which the objects at stake is the monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence- that is to say, the power to impose, instruments of knowledge and expression of social reality, which are arbitrary (yet unrecognised as such)."

- (Bourdieu, 1977:115 cited in DiMaggio, 1979)

DiMaggio (1979) explains that society combines social system is built on the hierarchies that are governed by the similar rules or logic. Society is a combination of fields that exist in variety. It is a positional context, largely a space of distribution of capitals. Society is an articulation of the fields in which people are in constant struggle to accumulate capitals in a given field to gain recognition. As DiMaggio (1979:1463) suggests:

"Field refers to both the totality of actors and organisations involved in an arena of social or cultural production and the dynamic relationships among them."

Fields are the sphere of conflicts and constant struggle in which social actors compete with each other to gain a monopoly in the capitals that are highly valued in the field. For Bourdieu, *capitals*, not necessarily in a material sense, are understood implicitly as attributes, possessions, or personal qualities of social agents, exchangeable with and convertible into other forms of capitals, consisting of material and symbolic goods and could be acquired through the process of accumulation. The 'field of education', in particular, is identified by Bourdieu as a mechanism in the production of the class inequality and social stratification by exacerbating and manipulating class based differences. Schools are positioned in society as institutions aiming to eradicate differences and facilitate equality among individuals; however, in reality, it exacerbates the class difference of students using its arbitrary cultural scheme and autonomy. The arbitrary culture at schools reproduces and legitimises the social differences among children by transforming social distinctions into academic distinctions (DiMaggio, 1979). The academic rewards are given to those who possess and demonstrate familiarity and competence with the culture of the school and teachers perceiving their familiar knowledge as a natural talent while disadvantaging those who fail to demonstrate such familiarity or possession of knowledge.

In this process, children enter the school with distinct levels of socialisation acquired at home called '*Habitus*' together with embodied Capitals and linguistic competence to succeed in education. '*Habitus*' is composed of the competencies, temperament,

department, taste, insecurities, cognitive structure, bias, predispositions, and expectations that are present in the mind and the body of a person. As a concept, it seeks to describe the way objective or material conditions of existence are internalised into a subjective disposition. According to Bourdieu *'Habitus'* represents:

"The system of dispositions towards the school understood as a propensity to consent to the investment in time, effort, and money necessary to conserve and to increase culture capital."

- (Bourdieu, 1977:495 cited in Sullivan, 2002)

Dominant *Habitus* exhibits specific cultural tastes and codes held by the dominant class, which cannot be assumed in the middle-class *Habitus*. *Habitus* is transmitted within the home, but also extends and is modified with new embodied tastes and dispositions as life goes on. Bourdieu suggests that *Habitus* allows individuals to succeed or restricts them, in education. For example, students with a privileged background may find cohesion with the academic environment at school, which is simply the extension of the cultural sphere readily available at home; it helps them better to succeed than those who lack such dispositions. In this vein, students with middle-class characteristics may find hard, but rewarding and highly valued educational experiences in school are generating class-based advantages. In contrast, a school that operates by its arbitrary rules, which Bourdieu would describe as arbitrary and cultural autonomy to praise highbrow culture, becomes inaccessible for the non-privileged due to a possible mismatch in selection criteria or the sense of it as an alien place for those who somehow manage to get into. Bourdieu does not define the cultural arbitrary at school. However, he states that:

"In any given social formation the legitimate action, i.e. the pedagogic action endowed with the dominant legitimacy is nothing other than the arbitrary imposition of the dominant cultural arbitrary insofar as it is misrecognised in its objective truth as the dominant pedagogic action and the imposition of the dominant culture"

- (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990:22)

Sullivan (2002) considers 'educational standard' in some sense understood by Bourdieu as arbitrary. The criteria set for curricula, evaluation of learning or examination at school reflect the cultural values of dominant classes and elite cultural components in which to demonstrate familiarity, become a challenge to working class children. Nash (1990) explains, in detail, the cultural autonomy of school by revealing the autonomous power within it which is an active rather than passive instrument to modify and transform the

family acquired '*Habitus*', meaning that schools have the authority and power to shape human consciousness. As Nash quotes Bourdieu:

“It may be assumed that every individual owes to the type of schooling he has received, a set of basic, deeply interiorised master patterns.”

(Bourdieu, 1971: 192-193 cited in Nash, 1990:435)

The role of schools is thus active in generating unique *Habitus* rather than merely legitimisation of family formed *Habitus*. In this vein, the arbitrary culture of the school becomes significant. Quite rightly, as Nash stated:

“If the cultural arbitrary of the school is not (the same as) the culture of students or a section of its students, then the effectiveness of the school as an agent of cultural transmission will be weakened greatly.” - (Nash, 1990:435)

The need to showcase 'scholastic necessity' at schools adds further complexity to such arbitrary culture of schooling as the non-privileged student fails to adopt and immerse him/herself into such an arbitrary cultural scheme. In this sense, the probable mismatch between the cultural scheme of students' *Habitus* and that of schools may result in the marginalisation of students who do not possess such cultural codes or 'the cultural fitness'. Bourdieu explains the theory in abstract form as:

“Reproduction [the book] sought to propose a model of the social mediations and processes which tend, behind the backs of the agents engaged in the school system- teachers, students and their parents- and often against their will, to ensure the transmission of cultural capital across generations and to stamp pre-existing differences in inherited cultural capital with a meritocratic seal of academic consecration by virtue of the special symbolic potency of the title (credentials). Functioning in the manner of a huge classificatory machine which inscribes changes within the purview of the structure, the school helps to make and to impose the legitimate exclusions and inclusions which form the basis of the social order”

- (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990: X)

He further adds that:

“All pedagogic action is objectively symbolic violence [3] in as so far as it is the imposition of cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power.”

- (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990:5)

Because of the symbolic violence of 'pedagogic action', it is most likely for the much less privileged to face failure in the education system -apparently due to the lack of resources and characters (e.g. 'Forms of capitals') that are shared between students with elite or privileged inheritance and their educator. Aschaffenburg and Mass (1997: 573) explains:



"Individuals enter the educational system with different endowments of cultural capital and cultural knowledge, based on their social background. These initial differences in the cultural capital are not equalised over the educational career, but rather, are exacerbated. Students with more (and the correct) endowments of cultural capital- students from families with the skills and preferences of the dominant culture- are better able to decode the implicit 'rules of the game', are able to adopt and further develop the cultural skills and preferences rewarded in the schools, and hence are better able to negotiate their way through the highest educational levels. Social inequalities are perpetuated as initial differences in cultural capital become systematically encoded in educational credentials, which then funnel individuals into social class positions similar to those of their parents."

-Aschaffenburg and Mass (1997: 573)

Because of this arbitrary process, the education system or school act as a discriminatory channel and help to reproduce class advantages for the upper classes through educational achievements and credentials that carry class attributes and play an important part in the reproduction and legitimation of social inequality.

### 2.2.2- THE FORMS OF CAPITALS

Bourdieu's conceptual novelty has been appreciated with his classification of four generic types of capitals, formally called '*the forms of capital*'- *cultural, economic, social, and symbolic* (Bourdieu, 1986). The first three have been given considerable attention in scholarly investigations to explore social class differences in educational attainment.

Drawing on Karl Marx, Bourdieu used the term '*capital*' to explain the value systems in culture and cultural production. These 'capitals', by functioning as a form of currency, have an exchange value, which renders them convertible into tangible objects such as goods or money, and other forms of capital. Each has different properties -governing such conversions and transmissions – largely understood as-*flexibility, fungibility, contextual, dependence, and alienability* (Savage et al., 2005). Bourdieu himself explains the forms of capitals briefly as:

"Capital can present itself in three fundamental guises, as *economic capital*, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as *cultural capital*, which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as *social capital*, made up of social obligations (connections), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility."

-(Bourdieu, 1986:242)

These types of capital, together, produce an analytical framework, which shows the actual transmission of cultural values, and attributes from parents to their children, which help them acquire and sustain their class privileges. These capitals are used by social agents occupying a position in a particular field (sphere of power or prestige) to gain a monopoly in the struggle for dominance.

***Culture capital:*** As a standalone ‘signature concept’ of Bourdieu (Lareau and Weininger, 2003:567), ‘*culture capital*’ refers to one’s inherent cultural competence or dispositions acquired through the immediate environment which consists of family and cultural attributes. It consists of familiarity with dominant cultural norms, with access to and possession of skills, attitudes, tastes, language, and intellectual compatibility with ‘highbrow’ culture. Despite the lack of precise definition of cultural capital, there have been many attempts to define it in different contexts (Lareau and Weininger, 2003:570). Xue (2008:77) states:

“Culture Capital refers to the mastery of dominant cultural codes and practices such as linguistic styles, academic discourse, aesthetic preference, and manner of social interaction.”

Rounsaville (2011) defines ‘culture capital’ quoting Schuller (2001) as:

“Advantages which an individual enjoys and acquires through education, family and other sources that confer social power and status upon that person.”

- (Schuller, 2001 cited in Rounsaville, 2011:110)

Culture capital comes in *embodied* (familiarity with the dominant culture, taste, linguistic competence, knowledge, and dispositions), *objectified* (Possession of cultural goods and objects), and *institutionalised* forms (Certificates and Credentials) (Bourdieu, 1986). Embodied forms could be the result of constant learning and the adoption of established cultural norms and practices. As Sin (2013b:9) pointed out:

“*Embodied cultural capital* consists of a set of acquired and socialised bodily and mental dispositions, such as knowledge, competence, preference, and practical actions which consist of the core properties of the self.”

- (Bourdieu, 1997:47-50 cited in Sin, 2013b:9)

An ‘*objectified*’ form of cultural capital uses the very foundation of embodied cultural capital to enable oneself to accumulate and possess cultural objects. ‘*Institutionalised*’ forms of cultural capital consist largely of certified knowledge, recognised, and confirmed credentials that one could obtain by certain procedures, particularly those linked to education.

**Economic capital:** refers to the possession of financial resources, assets, valuables, including cash, gold and easily exchangeable objects considered as currency. Bourdieu seems to give preference to economic capital as the basis of easy conversion and transmission of other forms of capitals, mainly due to its properties and materialistic nature. Institutionalised capital includes tangibility, easy convertibility, and extensive acceptability. Bourdieu (1986:250) argued that “*Economic capital is at the root of all the other types of capital*”. It enables one to acquire, consume, and enjoy other forms of capital due to its fluidity, which provides the possibility of immediate consumption.

**Social capital:** refers to the social dynamics of power relations between individuals and consists of social networks, group membership, networks, and resources that are linked to actual and potential channels of social interaction among individuals. The relationships with the members of society or a community determine the strength and volume of social capital that one can enjoy and is influenced by access to dominant social ties. Bourdieu (1986:247) explains:

"Social capital is the aggregate of the actual and potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition."

- (Bourdieu, 1986:247)

Social capital allows one to build an affluent and influential network and legitimise their social positioning using connections with dominant people or groups. It is relational and exists within a particular network or series of networks. The possession of the forms of capital determines the trajectory of students' progress in education. It is suggested that culture capital -among other capitals- is most likely to affect this progress, which is distributed unequally among social classes. Despite this, schools assume the possession of culture capital by default, which disadvantages students with a serious lack of capitals (Sullivan, 2002).

### 2.2.3- THE CONVERSION AND ACCUMULATION OF CAPITALS

The functioning of these capitals, which facilitate social reproduction, relies solely on the successful transmission of capitals between generations and their convertibility into each other across time and space. Bourdieu considers that '*capital is accumulated labour*', which builds on, and requires the time and effort of the possessor to sustain, their class position. Bourdieu (1986:250) states that:

"The different types of capitals can be derived from economic capital, but only at the cost of a more or less great effort of transformation, which is needed to produce the type of power efficiency in the field in question"

- (Bourdieu, 1986:250)

Culture capital, for example, could be converted into a source of income in the form of credentials, linguistic competence, or skills and could be used to associate with a dominant network, information channel and/or network of powerful connections. Economic capital could be used to gain access to elite education at home or abroad, enable one to participate widely in culture and affluent cultural activities which help to embody aesthetic, cultural norms and which extend valuable social networks and connections. Social capital, as Putnam (1995) and Coleman (1988) argued; helps individuals gain an advantage by using social relations within and outside families and converting them into economic and cultural benefits. Bourdieu argued that:

"The convertibility of the different types of capital is the basis of the strategies aimed at ensuring the reproduction of capital (and the position occupied in the social space) by means of the conversions least costly in terms of conversion work and of the losses inherent in the conversion itself (in a given state of the social power relations)."

- (Bourdieu, 1986)

Bourdieu suggests that we live in a continually synchronised field in which capitals interplay with one another persistently, transforming others, as well as being transformed by them. This is not a question of having or not having capital. Instead, it is the question of 'how much capital' to accumulate and about having the right combination and amount of capitals that is required in the field, to achieve success. In the process of capital accumulation individuals invest in and accumulate all forms of capital by committing time, effort and resources, albeit differently, but the outcomes of these investments will vary according to the level and type of capital people can mobilise.

#### 2.2.4- THE CRITIQUE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE SOCIAL PREPRODUCTION THEORY

Despite huge contribution of social class analysis and its reproduction thesis, Bourdieu and his key concepts are not free from criticism. Bourdieu is personally criticised for his inaccessible writing and style of expression, creating unnecessary trouble to those who are unfamiliar with his style of arguments and terminology (DiMaggio, 1979). The inconsistent use of terms, lack of clarity, vagueness, and poorly defined concepts are also part of the frustration, leading to inappropriate use and difficulties in the operationalisation of concepts e.g. Habitus. Conceptually, Bourdieu fails to provide a satisfactory and clear definition of his ideas. '*Habitus*' is particularly targeted due to the difficulties in understanding it, and the impact of cultural capital is not fully explained (Sullivan, 2002; DiMaggio, 1979). Bourdieu's theoretical insight is far from complete and does not provide an answer to many key questions, for example, the link between educational attainment and future career paths have not been explored. The major area in which Bourdieu falls behind has been the failure to provide satisfactory evidence to support his theories either by himself or by other fellow scholars, who conclude their investigations with different and sometimes contrasting results (Sullivan, 2002; Kingston, 2001; Goldthorpe, 2007; Tzankis, 2011). Goldthorpe (2007) evaluates Bourdieu's work by adopting a quote that 'what is original is not sound and what is sound is not original' (Goldthorpe, 2007).

Having said that, it seems that the novelty of Bourdieu's work has been able to attract enormous attention to his '*thinking tools*', reluctantly assumed by scholars as a standardised formulation (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:23 cited in Silva and Edward, 2004). Nash considers them as '*metaphorical and analogical*' in nature (Nash, 1990), while on the complexity issue, Bourdieu should also not be blamed for following the French scholastic traditions of complex writings. Also, the adoption of his theoretical framework by English speaking scholars has been a part of the problem in misunderstanding his viewpoint (Nash, 1990). Despite criticism, his work has been widely cited, used, tested, and been able to produce mounting academic literature since its emergence in the 1960s. There is ever growing literature supporting or contrasting Bourdieu's view. However, in both perspectives, Bourdieu has provided a theoretical approach to work with. Savage et al. admitted, in support of Bourdieu, that he is '*operationally less precise, however theoretically and conceptually richer, and more versatile*' (Savage et al., 2005:43). Given its merits in educational research, this study has a

special interest in Bourdieu's vision, mainly due both, to the high relevance to the context of the study and the obvious inclination of scholars to use his theoretical tools in exploring the use and advantages of student mobilities, as a part of their social trajectory.

### 2.3- THE CHANGING ROLE OF CAPITALS IN GLOBALISING WORLD

In present globalising world, international education and its products e.g. degrees obtained internationally are being pursued due to its exclusive currencies in gaining positional advantages in the labour market (Water, 2008; Brooks and Waters, 2011b). As globalisation intensifies and state policies in the West favour a neoliberal agenda in turning education into a commodity to export for financial gain, the middle-class choices for differentiated education have been irreversibly transformed, preferring study abroad strategies to overcome 'massification' of education at home (Waters, 2008). However, the pursuit of class privileges through exclusive foreign education is not limited to educational advantages but consists of a wide array of opportunities that are being associated with the educational mobilities. This provides a unique context within which to reproduce class advantages (Findlay et al., 2012).

As the spaces of reproduction have shifted globally, the democratic spread of, and access to, tertiary education at home -termed by Water as '*massification*'- have reduced the prospects of rewards from local education for the middle classes. Yet, at the same time, it has increased their dependency on educational credentials due to the rise '*credentialism*' (Water, 2008). This has led to their increasing interest in foreign academic credentials, especially western, which appear to promise unprecedented returns from investment in study abroad. In part, social advantages can be achieved strategically in the form of foreign qualifications, as a part of '*foreign culture capital*' (Sin, 2013b), as a means of exclusion or distinction, which not only confers the possession of superior knowledge, skills and competencies most valued by employers, but also embodies the aesthetic cultural norms, values, attributes and soft currencies possessed by foreign graduates (Sin, 2013b). The social reproduction of class advantages using foreign qualifications has three added dimensions. These are 1) Cross border mobility in pursuit of elite education, the process in which capital accumulation takes place across time and space, and the effect of this process on educational attainment. 2) The exclusionary role of the education system in a destination which rewards the privileged for their elite dispositions more than their less privileged peers; yet the privilege based divide seems to be limited by considering all international students as less privileged regardless of their

social background; and 3) the spaces in which the return of foreign culture capital is perceived, conceive and utilised. Scholars suggest a promising return of foreign capital could be achieved back home (Sin, 2013b; Xue, 2008; Waters, 2008).

To evaluate the use and purpose of international education, scholars have been trying to bridge the gaps within Bourdieu's original vision of 'forms of capital' with recently discovered field-specific capitals, e.g. Network capital (Urry, 2012) or Motility capital (Kaufmann et al, 2004) Body capital (Ong, 1999: 91) Emotional capital (Reay, 2000:60); Educational capital and Political capital (Savage et al, 2005) to accommodate changes in perspective and the extent of class reproduction after globalisation. Cross-border mobility in education, itself functions as exclusionary and provides access to benefits when exercised (Tran, 2015). In ever extending spaces of education where conversion and transmission of capitals are free from time-locations, social and cultural reproduction is not necessarily limited to existing stocks of capitals but involves incorporating other forms too. The struggle to achieve distinction extends to more than one societal space, accompanied by new opportunities and challenges to capital accumulation. Therefore, one must examine the academic environment at the destination in which credentials are achieved.

Apparently, the space of reproduction extends beyond national borders, involving diversity in culture, pedagogic practices and learning styles, which divide a student body on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, and origin. In addition, academic institutions - controllers of the curriculum and content of the courses, and teachers, devising pedagogic practice in teaching and in assessment may act as exclusionary to student migrants by rewarding, arbitrarily, those students who best reproduce the attitude and knowledge of the host culture, which in itself, is likely to be an alien place for student migrants. While the arbitrary assessment remains in place, several difficulties in adaptation to the host culture capital emerge. In the process, academic success relies on active participation in and demonstration of adopting and accumulating the academic culture dispositions of the host, which then can be fully utilised by students on their return to their home country. In this light, the study abroad transitions present the student migrants with a 'capital deficit' effect -existing stock of capital may or may not function instantly due to sudden spatial relocation. Thus, to some extent, students lose their currency and functionality during the cross-cultural transition. Mobility from one cultural sphere to another can mean the immediate, partial or complete loss of capital, for example, loss of contact on arrival or limited/no access to financial support in destination countries. To overcome such deficits of capital and to fit best with the education system at a distance, students and their families

have to invest heavily in the capitals and increase their effort to transmit and convert forms of capital; to recover capital loss occurred in the transition. The capital accumulation in this entire academic journey represents a process of incorporating and replacing or combining, to remain competitive and transmit Capitals into successful academic credentials. The end product, academic credentials, would then certify and confirm the possession of cultural norms of the destination country, for example, linguistic proficiency, skills, attitude and elite tastes, which are fully utilised back home by producing class advantages and converting into social privileges.

The empirical evidence, to distinguish student migrants from local students in destinations, appears to support Bourdieu, based on various accounts that suggest international students facing difficulties and challenges in their transition in education abroad, is an extension of academic expectations to demonstrate the right level of cultural capital, particularly its embodied form. The problematic experiences in study abroad are merely a representation of capital deficit. Inevitably, the dependency between the different forms of capital increases to overcome the capital deficit and recover the stock of pre-existing capital lost in transition. Unsurprisingly, the functioning and use of capitals become unpredictable when exercised internationally. The family inherited capital, in particular, provides a student with the necessary backup. Evidence suggests that successfully transmitted parental capital in childhood and sufficient stock of economic and social capital gives an edge to the privileged compared with their counterparts who experience a capital deficit. By inheriting parental capital and class privileges, success at a western university rests upon the best use of capital and resources, and the successful effort on the part of students to convert them into valued foreign credentials with the consequence of reproduction of social privileges and labour market advantages. In dealing with the challenges, transmitting the embodied culture capital and 'Body capital' (Ong, 1999:91) of the student into institutional capital 'credentials' becomes the determining factor, more than two other pre-conditions explained by Jaegar (2009), 1) the capital stock in parents, and 2) transmission of parental capital onto children, required for a successful transmission of capital into valued credentials. Which capital plays a central role in accumulation, and therefore in (re) production remains a complicated question. Inherited culture capital helps to produce foreign capital by trading off with other forms of capital. It appears that the embodied stock of capital helps to transmit existing capital into foreign cultural capital, yet the role of economic and social capital still counts, as out of 'space' accumulation requires a greater dependency on financial resources and social networks to build trust relationships within



local communities. Culture and social capital are expected to affect their potential largely during the cross-cultural exchange, as they require intensive effort and substantial time to accumulate and reinvest to reproduce. In reality, their function compromised due to their use in foreign cultural settings. Also, globalisation and its impact on education have transformed the space of capital accumulation and as a result, advantages, together with reproduction itself. There are claims of different modes of reproduction, which do not require a return. Bass (2009) provides a typical example of migration upon completion of the study abroad, thus producing an advantage in the host nation rather than seeking it at home.

#### 2.4- SPACES OF EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGES, MOBILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCUMULATION

The literature suggests different modes of reproduction emerge during and after study abroad, yet it becomes complicated with the overlapping interests relating to mobility decisions; e.g. where to go and how to prepare for accumulation, as well as what constitutes advantages, whether it is decent employment, migration, or cosmopolitan identities. In this vein, global spaces for education are seen as a complex structure of opportunities offering a range of advantages to its buyers. However, the distribution of these opportunities is uneven and could produce unwelcome results too. The opportunities for class distinction at the international level are available either by being mobile to pursue study abroad or attending foreign education at home through transnational means (TNE). These frequently involve exclusionary choices and selection of destinations, disciplines, and particular HEIs. Also, international HEIs themselves are stratified through a global hierarchy of elite recognition (world ranking) which differentiates HEIs from one another and therefore benefit buyers differently. Further to this, the interrelationship between higher education and market operation seems to be getting stronger, where higher education is forced to train and educate people in the way the market wants, to advance business, commerce and production, while market orientation of higher education is perceived as an added advantage to the currency of qualification, most valued by employers. As a result, particular HEIs in the west with strong connections with the market are promoted as having an image of exclusionary advantage.

Apart from the initial exclusionary effect of a spatially uneven distribution of educational advantages and differences in global recognition of HEIs, educational mobilities facilitate class differentiation by applying the condition of being able to be mobile and having the

capacity to mobilise capital successfully (Brooks and Waters, 2011b). Educational mobility thus represents, individual competence, possession, and use of capital and mobility credentials (Passport, Visa) which best fit with the movement for cross-border education. Mobility, whether in the form of physical movement or as a social act, provides access to benefits and advantages in many ways. As globalisation forces objects, people and information to move or travel for benefits though, mobility in education has particular dynamics regarding its exclusionary role. As Urry rightly stated, "Moving between places physically or virtually can be a source of status and power" - (Urry, 2007:9). Many of them have come to the conclusion that, for numerous reasons, people move and take advantage of such moves by, for example, enjoying the benefits of '*network capital*' (Urry, 2012:27) or '*motility capital*' (Kaufmann et.al. 2004). Such capital disadvantages those people who are either unable to make use of such resources or who, for many reasons, do not have access to them. This both reflects and consequently contributes to, social inequality at large (Urry, 2012).

Mobilities, in a broader sense, referred to as a resource and a process in which capitals mobilise, enforce and transform each other in order to be mobile, which further initiates capital accumulation, and together they produce advantages, benefits to those who exercise them which, as a result, contribute to social inequality by discriminating against those who do not or cannot exercise mobility practices. As Urry puts it-, 'movement makes connections and connections make inequalities' (Urry, 2012). He further adds:

"Travelling, communicating and networking are not cost free; networking requires substantial resources of time, objects, access, and emotion. Those high in what I call '*network capital*' enjoy many benefits that are over and above their possession of economic or cultural capital" - (Urry, 2012:24)

Similarly, Kaufmann et al. (2004) conceptualise mobility as:

"Actual and potential social-spatial mobility, termed '*motility*', may be considered an asset. Depending on context, individual actors, groups, and institutions differ in access, competence, and appropriation and thus have at their disposal different motility options. Just as economic capital is related to knowledge, cultural wealth, and social position so does motility represent a form of capital that may form links with, and be exchanged for, other forms of capital" -(Kaufmann et al., 2004:750)

Neither of these concepts considers mobility as a process which solely generates benefits in a material sense, rather they associate them with other social-cultural dynamics of movement, providing access to benefits which can be transformed into various kinds of capital: cultural, economic and social, which can further facilitate 'distinction' among individuals, groups and social classes. Gopinath (2014) discusses two attributes of mobility

pathways among Indian families to produce advantages. These are 'controlled mobility' an interface between knowledge and society through which traditionally privileged families embark on class differentiation, compared to those who are on 'emergent mobility' and normally disadvantaged (Gopinath, 2014).

As a process in which capitals mobilise, geographical displacement is essential as it allows people to use existing stocks of capital to produce new embodied and objectified capital, yet work against capital loss in the process. Leung describes this process as:

"Geographical mobility can be conceptualised as 'a set of actually usable resources and power' (Bourdieu 1984:114) that can be converted into other forms of capital, which subsequently can be accumulated and transformed to further mobility, both in geographical (as in subsequent overseas travelling for varied purposes) and social (as in personal and career advancement) senses" - (Leung, 2013:4)

Mobility requires a certain set of resources, abilities and desires to move. In the absence of these resources, the benefits of mobility and associated social privileges can not be achieved. As a subset of the wider mobility paradigm, educational mobility, in particular, requires certain dispositions, cognitive readiness, and stocks of capital in order for someone to be mobile. Thus, it is necessary to devise a process in which benefits are produced, in the form of being mobile, to those who manage to mobilise resources, in accordance with the conditions of mobility, towards a particular destination. This mobilisation of resources becomes particularly important when the destination of an elite HEI requires students to demonstrate a high stock of capital in order to gain entry; this extends social stratification in international education using socially biased educational rewards.

When it comes to defining mobility advantages concerning reproduction, the strategic use of foreign credentials for positional advantages, produced back home, becomes apparent. Evidence suggests the advantages of study abroad are often perceived in terms of positional advantages, mainly in competing with local graduates back home and do make a difference when it comes to the employability of foreign credentials. This is grounded in a classic public perception that valued and vibrant experiences acquired through study abroad are highly desired in contemporary operations of business and commerce, especially in developing countries where the educational system does not meet the global demand for market orientation or innovation. The positional advantages of 'foreign credentials' in gaining and securing employment have been explained by Water (2009) in a recent study of East Asian international students and she concluded that in the era of

credential inflation and potential employability issues, study abroad and overseas workplace qualifications have a clear advantage in local labour markets (Waters, 2009).

Despite the lack of evidence of return mobility, to understand how education affects one's ability to produce advantages, a very limited literature suggests an important dynamic between mobility and opportunities for education which involves a home-destination-home circular movement that is closely linked to certain outcomes on return, usually reported as a significant contribution to 'class advantages' back home. In contrast to making sense of student decision to migrate, recent studies by Waters (2006; 2008; 2012) Brooks (2012), Leung and Waters (2013); Leung (2013) have demonstrated the common rationale behind study abroad aspirations; the idea of physical movement for educational achievements which are then later used to produce advantages back home. Thus, all forms of capital, especially cultural capital could, then, be converted into other material or abstract benefits to access privilege back home. In fact, the realisation of transformation in the capital on return has been stressed in most of the findings of the above scholars.

'Return mobility' refers here, to actual and potential move back to the society where the mobile student (later graduate) began capital conversion and utilisation/ consumption of accumulated capitals. This is the society where they can make use of their accumulated advantages by adding the value of foreign credentials. In other words, accumulated foreign capital, perceived to be containing something extra to the existing value system, enables the possessor to consume extra advantages. This is a typical process of sustaining differences within and between societies. However, there is contradictory evidence suggesting uneven consequences of mobility in some cases, for example, among Indian students studying overseas return, is seen as undesirable (Bass, 2009; Sondhi, 2013), whereas the magical property of 'Canadian credentials' provided Chinese foreign graduates with access to local labour markets yet, for many reasons, limited only to entry into a post rather than guaranteeing permanency (Water, 2008). Water stated:

"No further advantage can be seen, and they have to face the same competitive situation in the workplace. Though foreign credentials earn returned graduates an advantage in job seeking, it does not guarantee that they can keep the job once they have it"  
- (Waters, 2008)

It seems that positional advantages of mobility differ across time and space and cannot be guaranteed just on the basis of the 'magical properties' of foreign degrees; instead differential success could be achieved by the best use of credentials together with the accumulated capital that occurs and builds over the entire trajectories that the mobile

person creates. In this regard, capital accumulation is conditional and has an exclusionary character. It requires a certain capital set, volume, and combination of capital as a condition to produce an advanced version, or hybrid version of capital, which attains the most value in a given time-location. It works only in favour of those who already have the required set of capital, rather than those who suffer from capital deficiencies or are unable to mobilise them. External factors, including race, gender, and cultural bias also affect the capital accumulation process, though, Bourdieu (1986) did not acknowledge this limitation in his culture capital theory. For this, he often faces criticism (Ong, 1999).

In terms of participation in international education, affordability to pursue study abroad, the ability to mobilize resources, being able to manage the expectations of host HEIs and policies, and the constant effort to synchronize new information, skills, and social relations are among the many conditions that enable or restrict someone thinking of producing privileges through world-class education. However, in practice, capital could also be arranged rather than be in the students' actual possession. It is particularly true with the issue of material resources; therefore, that the less privileged could also manage affordability or at least, meet the essential criteria for entry to foreign HEIs, if not for the elite ones. In this case, the trajectory of capital accumulation made by students with arranged resources (loans) would inevitably be different from those who possess elite class characteristics.

In light of this, reproduction through international education has been understood as strategic, purposefully achievable by preferring HE status, English-speaking destinations, which are locally unavailable or where home courses and disciplines are limited. Moreover, policies and national strategies of destinations, which look to attract students seeking advantages through international education contribute to this. The spaces of reproduction are, therefore, unevenly distributed spatially as well as being processed through mobilities and individual efforts to maximise the possibility of entry into world-class education. At this level, family-based resources and direct involvement of the family in selecting HEIs to determine much of the control, support, and motivation to sustain class relations. This includes consideration of the location of study and geographical distance to which one can travel to pursue study abroad. Apart from this initial process of laying the foundation of inter-generational distinction through international educational means, the real differentiation takes place in the destination HEIs, just as it was conceptualised by Bourdieu (1986), but with added foreign elements. The role of foreign HEIs and pedagogic practices in differentiation, together with the well-cited problematic transition of

international students, both in and out of class, has real implications for social disparities. As a special interest, British HE is discussed and evaluated here in terms of its role in reproduction.

## 2.5- BRITISH HIGHER EDUCATION: SOCIAL DIFFERENCES AND (RE) PRODUCTION OF CLASS ADVANTAGES

The field of international education consists of global hierarchies of HEIs presented in the world rankings and western domination in knowledge production, and sharing is part of the dilemma middle-class families face (Marginson 2008, Guruz, 20011; Findlay et al., 2012). The UK strategically achieved its dominance in this field by raising academic standards, developing research capacities, and infrastructure to support an elite academic culture promoting excellence in learning, as well as reforming state policies, and enforcing commercial interests in education. World-class English education (Findlay et al., 2012) must attract thousands of families seeking class advantages by sending their children to British universities. The drive to excellence at British universities should raise the bar for a standard to achieve, not only by HEIs but also by staff and students attending elite education. This culture of academic excellence seems to complicate the expectations between British HEIs and its foreign clients as both are pursuing different goals but have the same faith in education. Students with middle-class resources may not necessarily agree with the expectations of demonstrating such excellence in a multicultural academy. This may be due to 'difference' based on their ethnicity, race or cultural belonging and 'otherness,' which prevents them from achieving 'best fit' with British education. Literature indicates the exclusionary nature of English education, responsible for widening social inequalities in British society and beyond. However, how it facilitates reproduction among student migrants is relatively unclear, and in particular, unknown for those coming from South Asia.

The literature suggests exclusion of international students in the UK could be divided into three major areas:

1. *The arbitrary culture of the school* -the role of teaching and learning styles, tough assessments requiring originality with honesty, expectations to think critically and reflect upon an international syllabus
2. *The social, cultural dynamics of schools*- relationships with classmates and tutors, being culturally marginalised, facing isolation and lack of support in making academic progress

3. *Cross-cultural adjustments and adoption in destination society* -in the wider context of cultural, psychological, and social integration and its limitations, all of which affect learning outcomes.

Cross-cultural impact on academic attainment has been conceived by scholars in two forms, firstly, directly in the classroom through various pedagogic practices (Nomnian, 2008) and secondly, in the wider context of living and working in British society. In both adjustments to and adoption of British learning, culture has been found to be largely pessimistic in studies of the learning experiences of Asian students in the British education system (Wu and Hammond, 2011; Brown, 2007). In a multicultural class, student-tutor relationship and student-peer interaction become vitally important due to their role in the integration of students with diverse cultural backgrounds. Apart from the worldwide scope, and advanced design of the curriculum, that requires a certain level of critical writing and thinking (Shaheen, 2012), the teaching style, delivery of contents, support for students with culturally diverse needs and power relations between overseas student and tutor have had an impact on learning outcomes and are seen as a potential area for improvement to create active participation (Lebcir, Wells and Bond, 2008; Gu and Maley, 2008). Fulfilling the demand for independent learning (Goode, 2007) and stereotyping of 'plagiarism' is a common feature of Asian students (Le, 2006) are also part of the overseas student life which becomes more intense by not having engaged properly with peers, which in turn limit the possibilities of intercultural integration in the class (Schweisfurth and Gu, 2009).

Positive classroom interactions and relationships with multicultural peer groups are found to be interlinked with the integration of overseas students, improving their linguistic aptitude, and opportunities for strengthening social capital that has lost its much power during the travel to the destination. Social integration and relationships with classmates have been discussed in the literature, along with the social and psychological transition, which settles as integration gradually takes place. Despite the common assumption of a weak relationship between local and international students and the practical emotional benefits of co-national relationships among foreign students (Brown, 2009), Montgomery (2006), Montgomery and McDowell (2009) have argued that ethnicity as a close bond between overseas students could be used, strategically, to overcome social capital deficits and to give a sense of achievement and being part of an emerging global community (Montgomery, 2006; Montgomery and McDowell, 2009). However, the opportunities to accumulate social capital by adding to the international outlook of the classroom mainly rely on equal status and sharing similar cultural values, language and common goals,

factors that can, in fact, limit the possibility of accumulating social capital in multicultural classrooms. In effect, loneliness, isolation, and stress-like symptoms have been noticed when describing the limits to interculturality in host educational settings. These add further complexities to academic attainment.

Despite the role of social difference among overseas students in producing an advantage, new forms of reproduction emerge in a multicultural environment with new power relations between local and an ethnically diverse, international student community, dragging overseas students into a disadvantaged position in achieving academic success. This is due to their unfamiliarity with the education system and to a deficit in the capital as a result of their mobility. It is understood that capital does not travel or transfer completely in the case of cross-border and cross-cultural contexts. International students, therefore, face new dynamics of class participation by struggling to demonstrate competence equal to, if not better than, local and international peers who are normally privileged (Water, 2012a), familiar with the destination/ dominant learning culture, and equipped with a different set of capital that works seamlessly in academic progress. Regarding the difference in performance of overseas students, it is argued in a study using official HESA data, that overseas students in the UK are less likely to achieve 'good grades' compared to local or other privileged, overseas peers (Morrison et.al., 2005:333)

Similarly, cross-cultural experiences and individual strategies for adjusting and adopting new cultural norms to fit in have been discussed widely in the literature. The majority of studies are related to the adjustment-adaptation process (Brown, 2008; Brown and Hollow 2008; Burnapp, 2006; Wu, 2008; Ayano, 2006; Gu, Schweisfurth and Day, 2009; Andrade, 2006; Montgomery, 2010) which is an uneven and long process of change in the self. The focus in this perspective is on barriers and individual agency (Back, 2008; Bass, 2009), culture shock (Yang, 2008), and the difficulties in adopting new ways of learning and living (Ashikaga, 2010; Lillyman and Bennet, 2014; Luzio-lockett, 1998). Moreover, there is a disparity in the challenges faced by international students, including, social and academic demands for linguistic competence, loneliness (Sawir et.al., 2008), social and psychological needs, isolation and lack of access to resources to overcome these challenges which, in themselves, are often exacerbated by the high expectations in class. The cultural tensions and struggle to cope with ongoing challenges during their academic transition is often limited, not only in class but also by the impact of cultural experiences outside the university (Singh, 2011), even after completing a degree (Tarry, 2011). It is clear that someone well equipped with capital and able in eliminating stress and depression is more



likely to face fewer challenges and might report only temporary difficulties of transition compared to those who have problematic access to resources and an irrelevant package of capital.

Capital accumulation at an international level differs from what we might imagine in a particular society. It involves students to adopt and accommodate cross culture differences in a destination while operating in the alien educational system. In order to do this, the access to resources and system of support become limited compared to native society. Students rely on embodied form of culture capital to achieve academically but culture capital itself requires an investment of economic and social capital in order to function properly. In this regard, students engagements in term-time working has been discussed in the literature and reveals a strategic approach, taken by students, to accumulation by learning at work, earning work experiences, and finding new ways to add value to formal credentials by becoming independent and dealing with skills deficits (Tomlinson, 2008). Term-time work commitments may vary from being inevitable among students with fewer privileges, to necessary for those seeking work based advantages in the form of skills, practical training, and operational understanding of business and management. Term-time work may provide top up income while social networks in the class, despite their ethnically limited character, usually help to ease the cross culture transition and to mobilise resources, which are fit for the purpose of accumulation. The biggest barrier in the accumulation process is the shadow of race, gender, and discrimination that limits the prospects of seamless conversion and transmission of capital. This is often presented as a criticism of Bourdieu's vision (Ong, 1999).

Capital accumulation in British HE, in this process, is understood largely, as an individual effort, mainly due to the challenges brought by cross-cultural exposure and studying in an entirely new learning environment, which increasingly includes academic expectations that the student will perform to the level of international standards. In contrast to a family supported and protected the environment with access to resources for capital accumulation, at the international level, it becomes an individual responsibility of the student to progress academically, mobilise resources in a way which fills the gap that capital deficit creates and which advantages come from. International Education presents the student with challenges to demonstrate advanced academic competence with or without the necessary access to resources or support. Canales (2013) maintains that individual factors, which help a student to successes in completing a qualification in a British HEIs, have been much more significant than institutional or contextual factors (Canales, 2013).

Scholars have noticed that the international student community is not homogeneous, but rather, consists of people with a variety of qualities and limitations, which are equipped with a combination of cultural, economic and social capital, and abilities to accumulate capitals that make each person different from one another. Morrison et al (2005), for example, have argued that there are exceptions to the language based assumptions suggesting international students perform less well than local or other privileged peers, meaning that there is a variety of people who are often viewed as a homogeneous group of students (Morrison, Merrick, Higgs and Metais, 2005:335). Peacock and Harrison (2009) share a similar view by underlining the fact that the discourse of cultural proximity and comfort of UK students often means they perceive their multicultural counterpart as being a uniform group (Peacock and Harrison, 2009:500). Tian (2008) calls for further investigation of the ‘complexity of and the power of individual agency’ and suggests that individual difference should be taken into account, along with similarities between groups (Tian, 2008). In a grounded theory study, Twigg (2006) argued that study abroad results in both advantages and disadvantages and that the overseas student adopts the learning culture differently (Twigg, 2006). Lack of appropriate data does not allow us to associate these differences with the social and cultural background, but one thing is clear; we need to think beyond labelling all students as being the same and having similar capacities, support, resources and a similar desire to produce advantages. There are inevitably differences, based on individual knowledge, abilities and linguistic proficiency, financial support and motivation to attend education abroad and, as a best guess, family and social background must play a role in making these differences, which further increase the likelihood unequal outcomes. The differences, thus, contribute to producing (dis)advantages by making better use of capitals and their conversion to accumulate further capital.

Some opposing views limit the chances of international students being differentiated in a multicultural class or by arbitrary exclusion (discriminated by tutors in rewarding achievements). This includes the commercial approach of HEIs, time as an adjustment factor and the personal drive to overcome challenges. It is suggested that the commercial orientation of British HE has contributed to ‘credential inflation’ which reduces the possibility of having a world class experience in class and an instrumental approach is used by both students and universities, aiming to maximise the pass rate (Standing, 2011). Aggressive strategies of British HEIs to recruit overseas students, to provide access to British education from a distance and the commercialisation of higher education is

criticised for having a negative impact on student experiences and the employability value of what is being taught (Tomlinson, 2008).

Following this discussion, it appears that international education, e.g. British HE does help in producing class advantages, though the mode of social reproduction may vary (Findlay et al., 2012). However, the employability of western qualifications is questioned by scholars, due to labour market trends and the international politics around student migration which limit the prospects of class reproduction by using 'foreign credentials' alone (Tomlinson, 2008). The arbitrary system of exclusion in British HEIs, cross-cultural experiences and uneven progress in capital accumulation in and out of the classroom, given individual social difference, helps to differentiate students with privileges from those who do not have them and in some ways contributes to their reproduction of class advantages.

## 2.6- BRITISH CREDENTIALS, EMPLOYABILITY AND SPACES OF SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

Until recently, the sociological discourse regarding perception and utilisation of international education has been limited to the use of foreign credentials in seeking employment. The attention now is turning to how overseas students perceive social reproduction through western credentials (Brooks and water, 2011). In this view, 'foreign credentials' as an end product of the academic journey normally are perceived as most probable, if not guaranteed, for producing advantages which gain and maintain class distinctions. In doing so, the magical property of 'foreign credentials' formally enjoys great currency in the labour market, both regarding international recognition and as a certification of certain embodied dispositions and accumulated capitals, such as English proficiency. Despite the use of internationally obtained degrees to achieve settlement abroad, as particularly noticed among Indian students seeking PR in Australia (Bass, 2008; Sidhu, 2012; Marginson et al, 2010), the general perception about the use of foreign degrees has been as a means to secure good jobs by outperforming local graduates, back home (Water, 2008, Brooks and Water, 2011; Weirs-Jenssen, 2008).

In the era of greater dependency on degrees to secure labour market returns, scholars challenge the view that suggests the guaranteed return on foreign qualifications if used back home. The tendency to question the value of foreign qualifications and foreign graduates intensifies as evidence emerges to support claims of the declining currency of

foreign degrees (e.g. British). The majority of claims have raised concerns over, on one hand, the unpromising British qualifications resulting from commercialisation, causing 'credential inflation' (Tomlinson, 2008; Miller, 2010) and on the other, reports that the skill level of foreign graduates are found to be inadequate because western HEIs are producing graduates with superficial knowledge in ever-increasing numbers without paying enough attention to the quality of the education. Moreover, contradictory evidence is mounting over how and where study abroad experiences contribute to the production of advantages. The use of credentials taken at face value appears to be instrumental and therefore is limited to its relative use spatially and over time, while accumulated levels of capital are hard to measure as a determinant of certain advantages and vary according to person, society, and culture. Findlay et al. (2012) suggest there is a social-educational differential influence over one's probability of embarking on globally distributed opportunities for labour market return. This involves a global hierarchy of HEIs by status, the social construction of employment opportunities, and class privileges that have influenced a student's cultural capital. For Findley et al. (2012), it is most likely that those who access an international career have been through the entire differentiation process including world-class education. By contrast, Leung and Waters (2013) conclude with the negative impact of a locally obtained British degree disadvantaging offshore graduates in Hong Kong (Leung and Waters, 2013). Consequently, international qualifications seem to be facing many challenges in terms of how they are used.

The competition for entry into elite professions has intensified globally, and host HEIs have contributed to this congestion by adding ever-increasing credentials and graduates to the market. Thus, having a 'degree is not enough' (Tomlinson, 2008) and it is claimed that the commercialization of higher education has resulted in the weakening of the currency of foreign credentials in a way that has a negative impact on both local and international students (Walker, 1997; Miller, 2010; Standing, 2011). The employability of British credentials, as a result, is seen as crucial as well as problematic in the reproduction of advantages. To put this into context, Miller (2010) has explained three models of commodification of British higher education, referred to as 'the credential model' (degrees as a certificate of learning and credentials could be bought and sold, resulting in 'credential inflation'), the skills model (universities sell transferable skills with a particular curriculum) and consumption model (universities are selling the educational experiences, students consume study abroad experiences as a commodity) (Miller, 2010). British higher education, as Miller has argued, has been offering all of these commodities to be consumed

by diverse student consumers, among whom some are interested in degrees, some seeking skills while some are enjoying student life itself. (Miller, 2010:204). The commercialisation of British education has had an impact on employability in many ways. On the one hand, it has helped in massification of credentials by providing direct, as well as offshore, access to British HE while, on the other hand, gaining qualifications is easier than it used to be and graduates have less knowledge, which is based only on surface learning. As a result, the relationship between educational credentials and their labour market return has become unpredictable. Tomlinson (2008) has stated that a degree alone is not enough to access labour market opportunities and that there is a growing desire to add value to skills and credentials to achieve distinction. In doing so 'soft credentials,' developed through enriched experiences and extracurricular activities are perceived as a potential response to the ever congested labour market (Tomlinson, 2008).

In response to employability related challenges, the spaces to utilise foreign credentials have been shifting. The majority of overseas students prefer to return to maximise the advantages of their qualification in the labour market back home or in the global south, which seems promising and where western degrees are still perceived to hold value. Foreign graduates are increasingly relying for employment on the labour market on return home, instead of on the global market, mainly due to policy-controlled access to the global labour market in the host country (Tannock, 2013). Intensifying competition for international employment positions and labour market flexibility causing job insecurity in the west (Standing, 2011) are further reasons that often lie behind the decision to return home after graduation. Also, inclination towards western education and credentials among employers back home undoubtedly has the biggest pull impact regarding return intentions (Santiago and Andrea, 2010). A range of other factors are listed by scholars when interpreting prospects of getting international employment for overseas graduates. These include, probability of finding work, skills mismatch and wage differentiation (Wiers-Jenssen and Tarry, 2005), social-family preferences (Gaddie, 2013; Soon, 2002) along with gender, age, disability and social class differences, (Moreau and Leathwood, 2006) all of which may have particular implications for reproduction.

Nevertheless, as Findlay et al. (2012) have argued, social and educational differences between foreign graduates provide several options through which to achieve distinction, ranging from international career opportunities to work positions lower down in the global labour market. However, it seems possible that social class, personal and family attributes, in the form of capitals, are key determinants of the outcomes of study abroad. As a typical

metaphor ‘foreign credentials,’ given their HE status, are perceived as holding currency and being in successful possession of elite culture. As such, they symbolise power and individual agency. Since ‘not all international students are the same’ (Chaudaha et al., 2012) capital accumulation, on an individual level, tends to function differently to achieve distinction. Therefore, the outcomes of study abroad cannot be the same for all foreign graduates. As a result, the inequality in outcomes is determined by the amount, quality and type of capitals accumulated and possessed by graduates during study abroad. In this vein, it is difficult to determine the employability of foreign degrees. However, compared to students with horizontal mobility, those with vertical mobility from Asia are seen pursuing advantages for not only the students themselves but their families too.

## 2.7- CONCLUSION

International education is perceived as a source of prestige, power, and recognition, among not only nation state but also individuals. In the current globalising world where institutions, e.g., higher education, have gone through a fundamental transformation (Standing, 2011; Marginson et.al., 2011), tertiary education faces new challenges as well as enjoying currency for bringing about socio-economic change and reshaping novel forms of dominance. In this context, one of the significant developments in the higher education landscape has been the extension of education beyond national boundaries, involving mobility of services, products, and students worldwide. International education, therefore, has become one of the strategic undertakings to gain or maintain the difference or distinction it confers (Brooks and Waters, 2011b; Waters, 2006b; 2009a; Findlay et. al, 2012). The social demand for international education sits comfortably with the neoliberal interest of market entry into tertiary education, making it more attractive and accessible to middle-class families worldwide. Despite the heavy investment in education and massification of university spaces in all parts of the world, student migration has grown substantially, reflecting the social demand for elite, international education, said to achieve class distinction, though how international education might benefit or disadvantage individuals can vary.

Cross-border movement of students has been part of the literature debate concerning both mobility and migration. Migration is typically represented as a permanent geographical move, either to escape disadvantages at home or in search of the better life and livelihood options abroad. Migration theories combine sending and receiving countries, to indicate causal factors that influence the migratory decision, and this has been conceptualised as

Brain drain for the sending country or Brain gain for recipient countries. As Castle et al. (2013) have indicated, the phenomenal growth of human migration in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been a part of globalisation and seen increasing inequalities between developed and developing nations. Nonetheless, the focus of migration theories is still limited to mapping the migratory process and the politics of gain or loss of skilled young people. The nation state in the global north has been the main stakeholder in designing policies to facilitate skilled migration and constantly benefited from such a Brain gain. The International student body has also been affected by international politics which strategically use study routes to allow skilled young people to seek settlement e.g. in Australia. However such politics has resulted in violence and security issues among overseas students as discussed by Bass (2009 and 2014), Sidhu (2011), Robertson (2011), and Marginson et al. (2010). Similarly, migration of family or family separation to send children for education in developed nations also indicates the migration-education nexus as described by Waters in numerous publications (2002, 2003, 2005, 2008, and 2015). There are also claims that student migration is closely linked to settlement in study destinations, as few students are willing to return (Findlay, 2011). To reflect the transfer of human capital internationally (Balaz and Williams, 2004), organisations like UN consider students are crossing the border as migrants due to a perceived close link between education and permanent migration (UIS, 2016). In this context, migration of students is seen largely as a matter of national interest while students themselves hardly receive attention. The migration theories seem to ignore the personal, social, and cultural context of students' decisions to move abroad for education. To fill this gap the 'mobility' paradigm has taken over migration and conceptualises mobility as a form of capital to benefit those who exercise them. Urry (2007, 2011, 2012a, and 2012b), Kaufmann, Bergman and Joye (2004), Sheller (2011), Murphy-Lejeune (2003:100), as well as many other scholars (Cairns, 2014 ; Sin, 2013a) explain the power and benefits of mobility who try to evaluate the mobility of students in relation to personal change through skills acquisition, self reliance, improving employability and developing cosmopolitan identities. This focus on self and life project is becoming attractive among scholars as it contributes to widening the horizon of student mobility by examining youth transitions (Cairns, 2014), the mobile being (Carlson, 2013; Crivello, 2011; Tran, 2015) and, as described by Brooks and Waters (2011b), personal strategies to gain advantages in the labour market or consume mobile experiences as adventure. In this vein, mobility is conceptualised as capital which is a resource often used strategically for particular benefits (Urry, 2007), Kaufmann, Bergman and Joye (2004), Murphy-Lejeune (2003). In a parallel theme, scholars draw on Bourdieu and use his

theoretical insight in explaining the accumulation of capitals, primarily in institutionalised (degree) and embodied (personal attributes) forms. According to this approach, students and their families strategically use mobility opportunities and experiences during such mobilities, to accumulate forms of capital, which in turn benefits them on their return. This is distinct from what we see in migratory decisions among Chinese families (Waters, 2008) to relocate self and families with a clear intention to stay permanently in the host country.

Drawing on Bourdieu (1986), the middle-class strategies around international education reveal that the opportunities for social reproduction are unevenly distributed across space, producing both advantages and disadvantages. International education and its relationship with labour market are seen, in this regard, as an extension of Bourdieu's notion of the social reproduction of class distinction in which:

“Social difference in the school system privileges access to world-class universities, while educational differences in a globalising HE system seems to influence the probability of an individual accessing a favoured position in the global labour market”  
-(Findlay et al. 2012:122).

The value of mobility has even expanded to conceptualise new forms of capital that involve the self, the body and embodied qualities e.g. linguistic competence, termed as 'body capital' (Ong, 1999:91), educational capital (Savage et al. 2005) and which are arguably considered properties of privileged and wealthy individuals that mirror the expectations of mobile students who wish to become one of them. By taking advantage of mobility paradigm, scholars globalising education as a process that has polarised the world and accelerated cross-border mobilities among students, towards western developed nations. This view associates the knowledge production in the west with its strategic use of either secure labour market return or reproduction of social class privileges back home. It is achieved by the strategic or spontaneous accumulation of capitals in destination countries, mainly in the form of credentials (degree) and embodied cultural codes that are utilised on the return, where society and employers value foreign knowledge and embodied human capitals. However, it is not always fruitful, as Brown and others (Brown, 2007a, 2007b; Brown and Holloway, 2008; Brown and Jones, 2011) have identified difficult transition of international students in British education. Using Bourdieu (1986), this could be rationalised as challenges to adopt and achieve in the arbitrary culture of British education which is predominantly elite and requires familiarity with dominant western culture codes, tastes, knowledge and how knowledge is produced, to succeed. Despite the assumption that the pursuit of knowledge is a privileged act, the neoliberal push widens access to British education, allowing access to students who are not so privileged and who



struggle to achieve in the educational process due to a shortfall in the capitals that are required to succeed. This suggests the heterogeneity among the student body. Therefore, the role of social and biographical differences, resulting in inequality in academic attainment goes unnoticed, despite its major role in the success or failure of international students in study abroad. Furthermore, the capital accumulation is usually different on an individual basis. As Bourdieu suggests, the individual has to invest capitals to produce or reproduce other forms of capitals. Students with a less privileged background seem at a disadvantage because shortcoming in capital prevents them from accumulating desired additional forms of capital. This could be seen in the problems of limited participation in and outside of university life, isolation, stress, engagement in paid work, etc which arguably affect attainment on many levels. In contrast, privileged students thrive in education due to possession of a high stock of capitals and their automatic/effortless accumulation. The different biographical trajectories developing through such unequal transitions are then legitimised by succeeding or failing to achieve credentials. This leads to the greater dependency of marginalised students on credentials due to a failure to accumulate culture capital in the form of embodied capital e.g. English language. In this context, credentials are perceived as a legitimate form of culture capital that conveys the symbolic currency of British domination in the knowledge economy. The British degrees are valued in an employment situation where possession of British credentials turns into an advantage to outshine locally obtained qualifications. However, the real potential of western degrees to ensure employability has recently been challenged by Tomlinson (2008) and Miller (2010) due to credential inflation and congestion in the labour market, leading to increasing competition for decent employment and giving rise to precarious employment for some. Meanwhile, the privileged continue to thrive, based on the abundance of capital and its seamless accumulation beyond the limited prospects that degrees confer in the labour market.

Following the above, the division between migration and mobility becomes unclear, as it is difficult to say which most affects students' decisions. In the current political climate while a study to migrate could hardly be achieved, study to mobile has been widely praised. Bass and other scholars, for example, have discussed migration linked to study, in destination countries becoming difficult, while scholarly interests in the mobility aspects of international students' life involve the transformation of the self with the western mode of symbolic currencies. In both perspectives, international students from South Asia have been neglected. Despite the enormous contribution of South Asia in shaping regional and

global trends of student mobilities, we know little regarding both mobility and migratory decisions, particularly from nations other than India. Studies, for example, representing mobility experiences have dealt with the uneven mobility experiences among Indian youth in London (Rutten and Verstappen, 2012), while Sondhi (2013, 2015) employs a gender perspective to investigate mobility and negotiation of gender roles among Indian female students on return to India. Similarly, Mukthyala (2012) contributes by examining the lived experiences of Indian students in the US and Gopinath, (2014) by explaining Indian youth pursuing an international education at home. In contrast, student migration has been part of the debate around skilled migration to the OECD countries (Khadria, 2008) or immigration politics and the vulnerability of Indian students in Australia (Bass, 2006, 2009, 2014; Marginson, 2011) and in the UK (Rajan and Wadhawan, 2014). Likewise, student migration from Nepal (Bhattarai, 2009, 2011) and Bangladesh (Anthias and Siddiqui, 2008) are discussed within the politics of Brain drain. The above studies concerning mobility experiences have enriched our understanding in some ways more than those who limit themselves to highlight trends or factors shaping such trends. Such information is not available for other parts of South Asia. Above all, none of the paradigms has discussed the social-biographical process among south Asian students pursuing education abroad, particularly to the UK. Studies contributing to migration have been limited to exhibiting the factors responsible for migration of students while mobility literature has just started to develop. Therefore, we do not know what influences decisions and motivates students and their families to choose to study in the UK? This study seeks to fill this gap using a social reproduction thesis.

## 2.8- CONTRIBUTION

The contribution of this chapter has been primarily to underline the lacuna in our understanding by analysing migration and the mobility paradigm. In doing so, the chapter reviews the literature to explain the weakness of migration theories in explaining local variations and regional movement patterns of international students. The majority of work being published concerning migration has been superficial, limited to facts and trends and undermines or ignores the subjective grounds on which personal experiences could be examined. The role of international education in making and reproducing class distinctions has been given no attention in South Asia. This is despite a constant flow of students from south Asia to the UK and the expansion of higher education in almost all nations in the region. To fill this gap, the chapter offers a theoretical insight, drawing on the work of Bourdieu (1984 and 1986), Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), which has been used extensively to explain the ways in which students and their families strategically use international education to reproduce social class distinctions in Asia (Waters, 2002, 2003, 2008; Sin, 2013b) as well as other parts of the world (Findlay et.al. 2012). The chapter further underlines the need to shift the paradigm in favour of mobility perspectives rather than migration, due to its merits in revealing the social-biographical process and self-project on an individual level, which has always been the foundation of mobility decisions to study abroad and could be associated with changing social dynamics of a student's native society. We also do not know the relationship between mobility and migration as to which influences what, to help develop a student's successful life trajectory. The chapter explains how migration theories undermine the social and cultural diversity in and between south Asia and are misleading due to the implied homogeneity of the Asian student body. This is particularly important when heterogeneity of student body has been widely cited in the literature. After all, the chapter highlights the extension of theoretical insights of Bourdieu to the global field of education resulting in modes of class reproduction taking place beyond national territory, which gives empirical strength to a social reproduction thesis. Overall, this chapter sets out a context in which the experiences of South Asian international students can be widely theorised and contributes to the support of Bourdieu's theory empirically.

## CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1- INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to explain the research method and the processes by which empirical data has been gathered in this study. The chapter starts by reviewing the literature to locate the methodological grounds of the research. It then focuses on the rationale behind the decisions I made for choosing South Asia and Post-1992 universities in London, for study using combined qualitative and quantitative methods. Further to this, the chapter describes the nature and size of the study cohort, field, and instrument selection, and how I accessed participants. I then go on to discuss the limitations these methods place on the prospect of generalisation of the findings of the study. The chapter finishes with a brief discussion of the results of the survey to outline the context for the qualitative analysis presented in chapters that follow.

### 3.2- METHODOLOGICAL RATIONALE: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study adopts a qualitative led, mixed method design, termed a *partial mixed sequential dominant status design- can-QUAL* (Leech and Onwuegbuzie; 2009:273). Apart from the increasing tendency, in researching human migration, to mix methods (Findlay and Li, 1999), there were practical and methodological challenges to address, including an unknown population, the subjective nature of the study, the sampling procedure, achieving validity, and reliability, and the generalisation of findings. These challenges required a robust blend of different methods and tools to satisfy the philosophical assumptions of the academic conventions, which led me to select this particular methodological design. A whole paradigm of mixed methods research has appeared on the methodological landscape (Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007) and scholars tend to innovate new ways of thinking, linking and mixing methods to eradicate the drawbacks of singular methods. In light of this, a range of terminology has been developed to describe mixed method approaches, including the idea of a third paradigm (Denscombe, 2008), integrated research (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004), blended research, triangulated studies, and mixed research. As an emerging third paradigm, mixed methods research is primarily, a practice based intellectual process aiming to fit between the traditional frames of methodological reference. Some say it is a departure from traditional social research and although it has its benefits, it comes with challenges of integration, validity and reliability (Bryman, 2006;

2007; Polite and Beck, 2010; Yin, 2006). Bryman (2006, 2007) expressed his anxieties regarding how mixed methods are being used without giving enough attention to the reasons behind the use of mixed methods and the value of outputs if integration is achieved (Bryman, 2006). Generalisation has also been a part of the problem (Polite and Beck, 2010). Despite these challenges, the scholarly tendency towards the third paradigm is noticeable, in particular on social-subjective grounds. Mason (2006), for example, highlights the multifaceted realities of human experiences that cannot be understood by relying on a particular method and argues that these social realities are experienced and enacted simultaneously, both at macro and micro levels (Mason, 2006). Nonetheless, the merits of mixing method recognised, and are reflected in the mounting literature defining, explaining, and operationalising how mixed methods research is being applied across disciplines.

Given this background, choosing a mixed methods design to investigate the experiences of South Asian international students comes with many advantages. Even if we disregard studies that tend to follow similar methodological paths, certain issues needed to be addressed. The unknown population of South Asian students in the UK, on the one hand, prevented me from drawing a probability sample, while on the other hand, the large size of this group, combining all South Asian countries, which was also distributed unevenly across British universities in London, required a large sample. Choosing a single method could result in disadvantages. Quantitative methods offer objective and unbiased results and prospects for generalisation of findings but compromise the subjective values and depth of analysis. In contrast, qualitative methods offer rich detail and in-depth understandings of the research subject but are often criticised on their subjective judgmental grounds, active involvement of the researchers and limited scope regarding the generalisation of findings. These challenges have been fundamental to the growth in the use of the third paradigm, where methods may come closer to producing the relative merits of both methodological approaches. Above all, the pressure is to achieve greater generalisation, enriched and in-depth understanding of the research objects, together with incorporating new sources of information, tools, and channels to extend the horizons of social studies.

Coming back to the context of this study, students' communities are moving across borders, adding the complexities of their identities, experiences, and social-cultural dynamics to their lives in transition. Their student lives contemplate encounters, interact

with a range of issues before, during, and after their period of study abroad, and therefore, are not always easy to understand using a single method. In order to address this challenge, I used a fully structured survey targeting the wider study population (in all Post-1992 university campuses) which, on the one hand, offered me an opportunity both to extend the sample size and to select students equally, without any prejudice, whilst on the other hand, it enabled me to develop a contextual frame within which case studies could be explored more deeply. Participants had an opportunity to understand the context of research by looking at survey questions, which I think, helped me focus on sharing relevant experiences in interviews. Despite these benefits, using a survey alone runs the risk of collecting superficial findings. This is mainly due to the survey's fully structured nature, which allows no opportunity for the gathering of new information, no possibility of probing further into specific questions, which arise, and a lack of open conversation about a student's experiences. These were some of the reasons why I relied heavily on qualitative methods and data, which promised a great deal of in-depth information to help analyse, develop and present arguments and conclude, with confidence, knowing that the results can be widely accepted, generalised and justified. By using these mixed methods, validity and reliability have been achieved in a number of ways. During the recruitment process, participants were invited, openly, without limiting their choices to participate<sup>2</sup>. Responses to both survey and interviews were fairly distributed across all study sites, which reduced the selection bias. Moreover, the online survey was developed with various technical functions such as skip logic, question logic, and auto shift answers to avoid answering priority bias<sup>3</sup>. The auto anonymity of respondents enhances the validity and reliability of the survey responses collected. Similarly, interviews were conducted in conversational form rather than in a structured style. This allowed participants to share their experiences freely, beyond the limitation of the questionnaire. Study results were then integrated at various levels, together with their cross-examination and presentation, to support each other. Above all, I intentionally chose to favour the qualitative side over the quantitative side, which has enabled me to generate a greater understanding of the experiences of the study cohort.

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<sup>2</sup> Disregard to participants' nationality, religion or gender, the researcher encouraged each potential participant to take part. The researcher wanted to achieve satisfactory sample size objectively, without giving favour to a particular university or nationality.

<sup>3</sup> To present responses in preferential order, which can produce biased results e.g. to stress the negative role of immigration reform over students, provides all negative response choices first rather than positive ones.

### 3.3- RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The initial focus of this study was Polish migrants in the East of England and their migration journey. I gave up this area of the investigation after nearly one year due to language barriers in developing a trust relationship with Polish migrants. At this time (2010-11), there was a sudden rise in the national debate about controlling student routes of immigration via student visa reforms and its possible consequences for Britain. I started feeling the personal impact of these reforms as I looked into the life of my friends and housemates who had been studying or living in the UK on post-study work (PSW) routes after finishing their education at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge. Most of my friends were from South Asia, particularly India and Pakistan. Many of them were friends that I lived with or was in regular contact with. One of these friends was Himanshu Agrawal<sup>4</sup>. Himanshu is from a town close to my home in India. Despite his upper caste and established family background, he had worked at many places and did not seem serious about his education. Maulesh Patel, from Gujarat in India and a classmate of Himanshu, shared a house with me and appeared to be honest and hardworking in his job at McDonald's, but reluctantly favouring work over study. His father owned a successful business in Gujarat and Maulesh was his only son. Mahesh Sharma and Neeraj Singh, both from India, were also my housemates at this time. Neeraj had finished his studies and was employed on PSW, earning money to support his family and repay his education loan. Mahesh was progressing towards completion of his Master's degree in Forensic Science. He was also keen to work during term time to reduce the burden of his university fees and the cost of living in the UK, particularly because he felt affected by the news of the revocation of PSW, which had been one of his expectations about studying in the UK. With a low-income family background and lack of support, he was particularly vulnerable to the effect of the student visa reform.

Similarly, Inder Sohel, Anand John Nayelet and Chetan Sharma all from India, did not live in the shared house but became my friends later on. Inder Sohel, a dentist by profession in India, did his Masters in Health Psychology at ARU and is from a middle-class family. Anand John and Chetan were from similar middle-class backgrounds, and both struggled to get good jobs following each of their academic successes in the UK. Chetan Sharma was lucky to get employment at Tesco. Inder worked in Marks and Spencer (M&S) as a supervisor and Anand John worked at McDonald's while he was studying during term

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<sup>4</sup> The names and places are real and I used them with prior consent of friends



time, and then secured a job at M&S during his PSW. Neeraj eventually secured employment in the National Health Service (NHS) in Sussex after a long search. However, their experiences with employment had a downside too. Maulesh and Anand John both failed their dissertations at their first attempt. This was mainly due to their commitment to term-time work. I cannot forget the moment when Maulesh burst into tears after learning that he had failed his dissertation. These circumstances made me more passionate to understand why all of them had to work during term time in the first place. Why did they come to study in the UK if they could not afford to pay for it? Moreover, why were their British qualifications not helping them to get good jobs in the UK? After discussing these questions with them, I got the impression that there were a range of issues responsible, including the disappearance of the 'London dream', blurred prospects from British education, both in the UK and back home, their own backgrounds and resources - mainly financial, and ultimately a high degree of uncertainty as to where to go and what they should do next.

I found myself amazed as I learned more about the effect of the student visa reforms on their lives. All of them were family- and/or self-funded, worked hard both at university and in their respective employments, and experienced tough times during their lives in the UK. Chetan and Himanshu both experienced particularly tough times, losing their jobs and leaving the UK within one year of getting their respective, PSWs. Neeraj had to leave his dream job after just six months and could not extend his visa or persuade the NHS to sponsor him. He is currently undertaking research in Australia. Anand John left the UK in 2014 and got a job in Dubai as a manager in a foreign exchange company for which his previous work experience at M&S proved beneficial. Inder went back home in 2014 and applied for higher studies in Canada but was rejected twice. He is now running a dental clinic in India. Mahesh is now married and working in a forensic company in Indore close to his home village. Maulesh had a particularly bad experience. He moved to a different city close to London and was served with deportation in 2014, with a ten-year ban due to excessive working without permission. He now works in a call centre in Gujarat. All of these people have left the UK for one reason or another. Apart from Neeraj and Anand John, all have had trouble in both the UK and India.

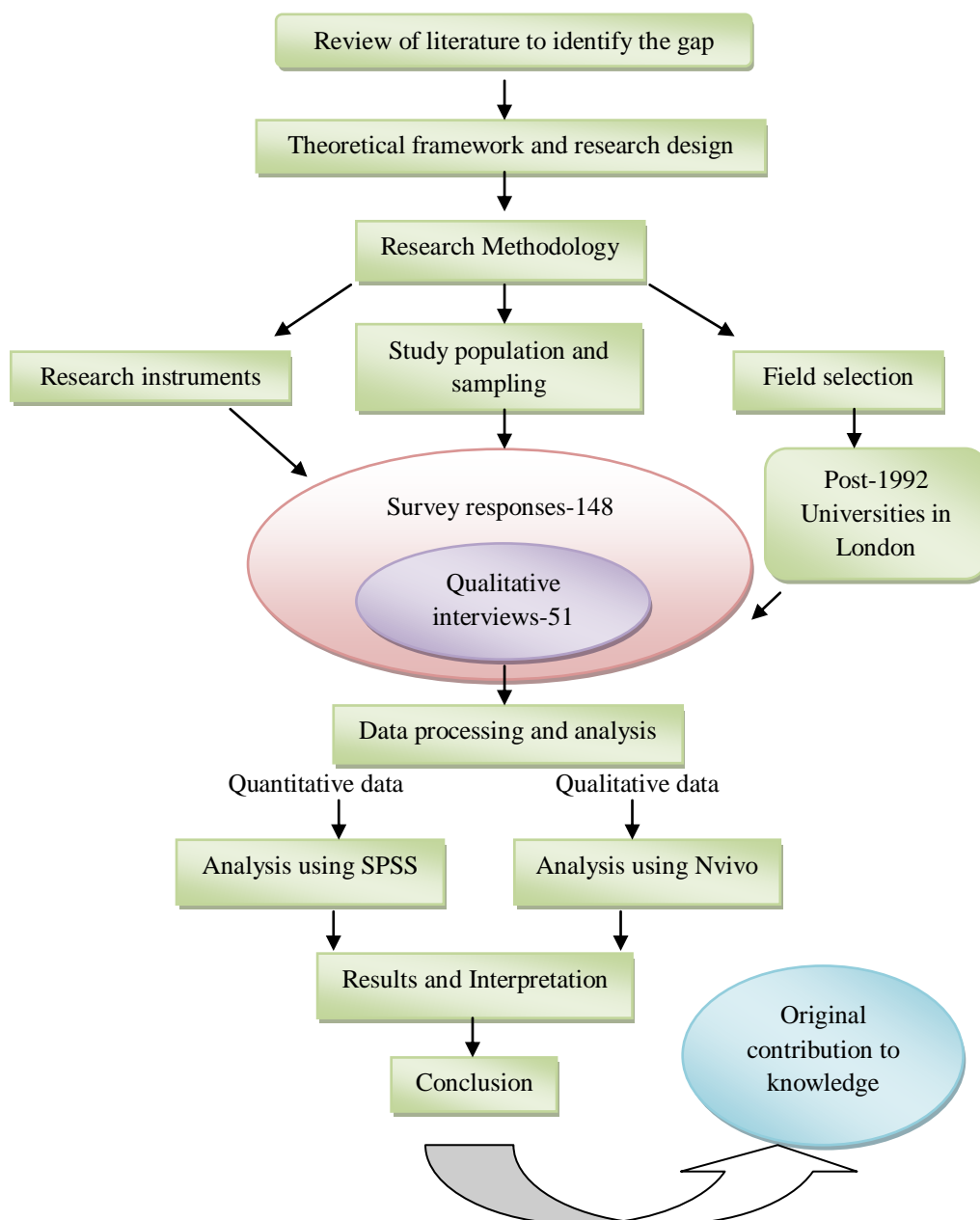
Inspired by these personal narratives, I realised that my friends had all had very different experiences. At this time, I did not know what factors played an active role in their achievements and what factors determined their successes or failures in studying abroad.

Nonetheless, I had developed my understanding of the experiences all of these friends each of whom had a very different background, education, and destiny to achieve, through his or her studies in the UK. Despite their unequal experiences of British education, they were all ultimately successful in attaining their qualifications, yet many of them failed or struggled to utilise their qualifications to secure employment in the British labour market. I was not sure why they were preferring term-time work over their education. This led me to question whether the term-time work had put my friends in a good position, as they had passed their qualification with average grades. I felt that term-time work or working in low-skilled employment after becoming a British student was not their first choice, though it seemed there were many advantages to having paid employment while studying, rather than just focusing on their formal education. In the long run, employment was not perceived as a reason to remain in the UK, but work experience in combination with their British academic qualifications was valuable. This is especially true in the cases of Anand John and Neeraj Singh. Based on these observations, I assumed that there must be different trajectories of success and failure for individual students and that it must be somehow associated with finance, family background and their motivations. Therefore, I surmised, studying abroad is not merely a process of acquiring a degree, but involves complex social processes, which enable one person to succeed where others do not. These experiences were an example of student migration in the UK. Thus I decided to explore, more widely, what the experiences of South Asian students in the UK are?

### 3.4- THE RESEARCH PROCESS

This research developed over time and faced many challenges as it progressed. These challenges included defining the research context, identifying the South Asian international student population in the UK, and determining the sample size. They eventually led me to select a mixed method approach, combining a quantitative online survey with qualitative interviews. In doing so, this study follows a qualitative led method in which the fully structured online survey provided context to the research, followed by a qualitative enquiry to investigate the experiences of study cohort in more depth. Snowball sampling enabled me to complete this project successfully. Figure 4 provides an overview of the entire research process and is followed by a detailed account of the key decisions that I had to take in gathering empirical data.

Figure 4 - THE RESEARCH PROCESS



### 3.4.1- THE CHOICE OF SOUTH ASIA

The primary reason for choosing South Asia has been its appealing status as a major source region with a long history of student migration to the western world (UIS, 2016). As explained in chapter 1, countries in South Asia has been sending students to almost all continent, particularly to Anglophone nations i.e. the US followed by the UK. The UK has been hosting a significant number of international students originating from South Asia for decades. They were particularly targeted by Prime Minister Initiative (PMI) programme 1 and 2 during labour government, making international student mobility between the UK and South Asia a phenomenon (Guruz, 2011). However, the Non-EU student immigration

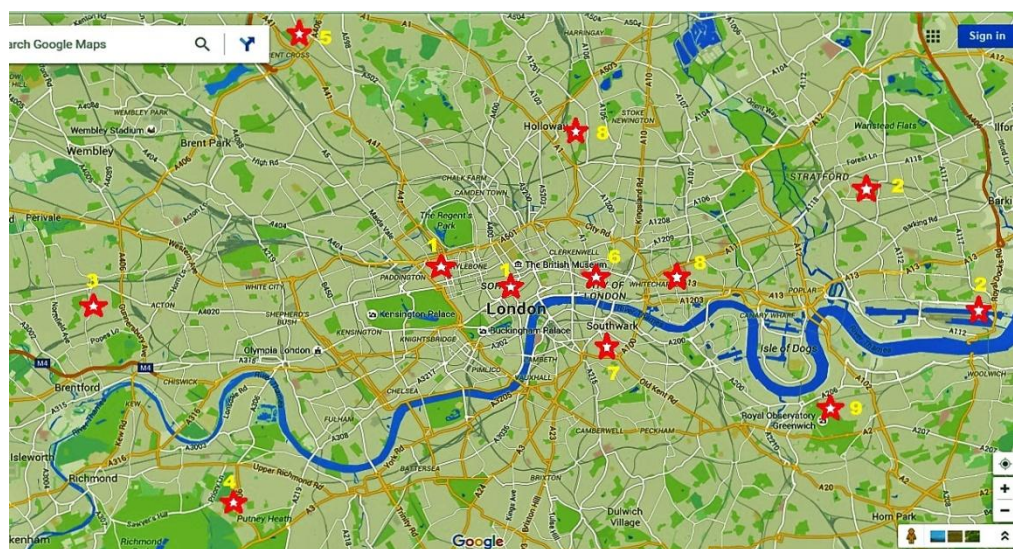
route in the UK has been recently problematised following student visa policy reforms in the UK which have revoked many rights and privileges that international student body used to have i.e. term-time work and revocation of post study work permits. This policy shift, as claimed by Cavanaugh and Glennie (2012), has led to a dramatic decline in inflows of an international student to the UK particularly from South Asia (HESA, 2015, UIS, 2016). In this vein, South Asian international students, now recognised as ‘migrants’, are seen becoming a problematic group in the UK, following racialisation of the international student community in New Zealand (Collins, 2006), and anti-migration feeling and victimisation of Indian students in Australia (Marginson et.al, 2010; Robertson and Runganaikaloo, 2013; Bass, 2006 & 2009). This led me to choose South Asia as a focus of study. In addition, sharing similar cultural values and ethnicity gave me a personal interest in his group in the context of rapidly changing immigration policy and its impact on international students in the UK. The latter was presented in the media as increasingly problematic. Moreover, regardless of quantitative figures on International student mobility from South Asia, qualitative studies are rarely carried out in the UK. Another particular interest has been to look behind the homogeneity of South Asia when it comes to investigating experiences of students, to examine how different these experiences are if students come from various countries in South Asia and what they represent as a whole. Similarly, how student mobility is shaping within and between these countries was of interest to me. There is evidence of India being the leading nation to provide a launching space for those students who, at the outset, cannot afford to access international education; therefore, exploring regional options may reveal new insight into debates about student mobility. These trends need to be examined and I decided, therefore, to focus on South Asia.

### 3.4.2- THE CHOICE OF POST-1992 UNIVERSITIES IN LONDON

There is a hierarchy of British universities consisting those, which are old and prestigious, and those, which are newly established. In 1992, many universities emerged on the horizon as a part of the strategic extension of the higher education sector in Britain. These relatively new (formally called post-1992) universities offered more space and opportunities to both domestic and international students, resulting in the high stock of international students at these universities. South Asia was not an exception and increasingly, has been sending students to those universities, in particular to those, which are situated in London (HESA, 2015; UIS, 2016; Cavanaugh and Glennie, 2012). Also, the

literature suggests the commercial approach of new HEIs, to reap benefit from the high demand for international education, has resulted in credentialism and employability issues linked to their qualifications, compared to the old prestigious HEIs. Combining this scenario with the new student visa regime in the UK, which is claimed to affect the formal rights and opportunities available to overseas students, has presented unexpected outcomes of study abroad and this, too, required investigation. Apart from this, many Post-1992 universities have the added advantage of their location in London. These universities were located across London with a diverse student population that helped me reduce selection bias in the sample. Likewise, I felt that the dynamic lifestyles and vibrant academic environment that London could offer might have influenced overseas students in choosing to study there, making it a suitable site in which to carry out my field work. In light of this, all Post-1992 universities in London were surveyed before conducting the research. Nine universities fitted the selection criteria, many of which have several study centres and campuses across London. These study sites are as follows (See Figure 5)-

Figure 5-THE FIELD OF INVESTIGATION



Graphic source: Google Map (accessed on 1.11.2015)

## STUDY SITES-

1. The University of Westminster - This study site is made up of three locations, close to each other: Marylebone Road, Regent Street, and Cavendish Street.
2. University of East London - this study site has two separate locations: Stratford and Docklands. I visited Stratford campus frequently as it was on my way to London.
3. University of West London -This site was situated in the far west of London on St. Marry Road close to Ealing Broadway railway station.

4. University of Roehampton – The UR study site is the ‘Erasmus House campus’, situated in Roehampton.
5. Middlesex University – This study site is called ‘The Burroughs Campus’. I had free access to all campus buildings apart from the library where I used my university identification to gain access.
6. University of Arts London - High Holborn campus is situated in central London, a few steps from Holborn underground station.
7. London South Bank University - Borough Rd Campus is actually a cluster of buildings situated on the South Bank of the river Thames.
8. London Metropolitan University – three locations: Holloway Road campus, Commercial Road, and the Guildhall Faculty of Business and Law.
9. University of Greenwich - The study site is really big, easily accessible, and situated beside the river Thames.

### 3.4.3- SAMPLING

The study population consists of all South Asian international students studying at nine post-1992 universities in London, without making further stratification based on gender, the level of study or age group. The changing number of South Asian international students in the UK, as well as the lack of information, made it difficult to assess the actual population size, which, in turn, prevented me from choosing a random sample. The study cohort is representative of the following eight South Asian countries: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan, and the Maldives, studying at nine participating universities. Due to the unknown size of study population, I used snowball sampling to approach and recruit study participants, as I believed that this was the best available method to adopt. As there was no targeted sample size to achieve, I decided to recruit as many as respondents as I could manage to start with, until data collection was enough to produce results and support the arguments presented in this study. Following this, 148 survey responses were collected and 51 in-depth qualitative interviews conducted, afterwards. See Table 3 for sample size and its University wise distribution. The majority of participants were from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, and the most were male. Also, the survey results suggest that the majority of respondents represent a younger age group, between 21 and 23 years of age ( $n=47$ ), and 24 and 26 years of age ( $n=51$ ). The proportion of participants studying at postgraduate taught level was significantly higher (77/120) than those studying at the undergraduate level, and most were enrolled in a Business and Management disciplines (49/118). Participants appeared to be quite evenly

distributed across all universities and representative of almost all of the South Asian nations, except the Maldives.

Table 3- SAMPLE SIZE AND RESPONSE RATE<sup>5</sup>

Post- 1992 University in London	Survey Responses		Interview Responses	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
University of Westminster	11	9	4	4
University of East of London	10	6	5	3
University of West London	8	0	2	0
Roehampton University	8	5	5	0
Middlesex University	15	1	5	1
University of Arts London	2	2	2	0
London South Bank University	8	6	7	1
London Metropolitan University	14	3	6	1
University of Greenwich	11	3	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>122/148</b>		<b>51</b>	

Source: Survey and Interviews

The representation of sample, regarding both its size and participation of students from all South Asian countries, could not be achieved well, partly due to its primarily qualitative nature (Baker and Edward and Doidge, 2012). The justification of sample sizes in qualitative studies has long been discussed. Scholars who have used qualitative methods to explore the experiences of the international student in the UK have drawn on a range of approaches. Studies by Tain (2008) and Nomanian (2008), for example, were based on just 13 Chinese multiple case studies and 7 Thai student participants to investigate positioning in multi lingual classrooms respectively (Tain, 2008; Nomanian, 2008). In contrast, many studies have attempted to achieve higher response rates and bigger sample sizes for interviews to overcome these challenges. Lee (2013) for instance, employed 43 international students for a qualitative study which explored their learning engagements, Twigg (2006) recruited 42 overseas students in a British university, while Sin (2013b) gathered responses from 36 Malaysian students by combining face to face interviews, focus groups, audio data and written interviews. Similary, Xue (2008) recruited 65 participants, including 53 Chinese students and 12 people working with them in the UK as well as a focus group of current Chinese students (Liu, 2013; Twigg, 2006; Sin, 2013b; Xue, 2008). Some scholars go even further to collect responses from a large group. Bass (2009), for example, collected data from 130 Indian students along with 100 other people,

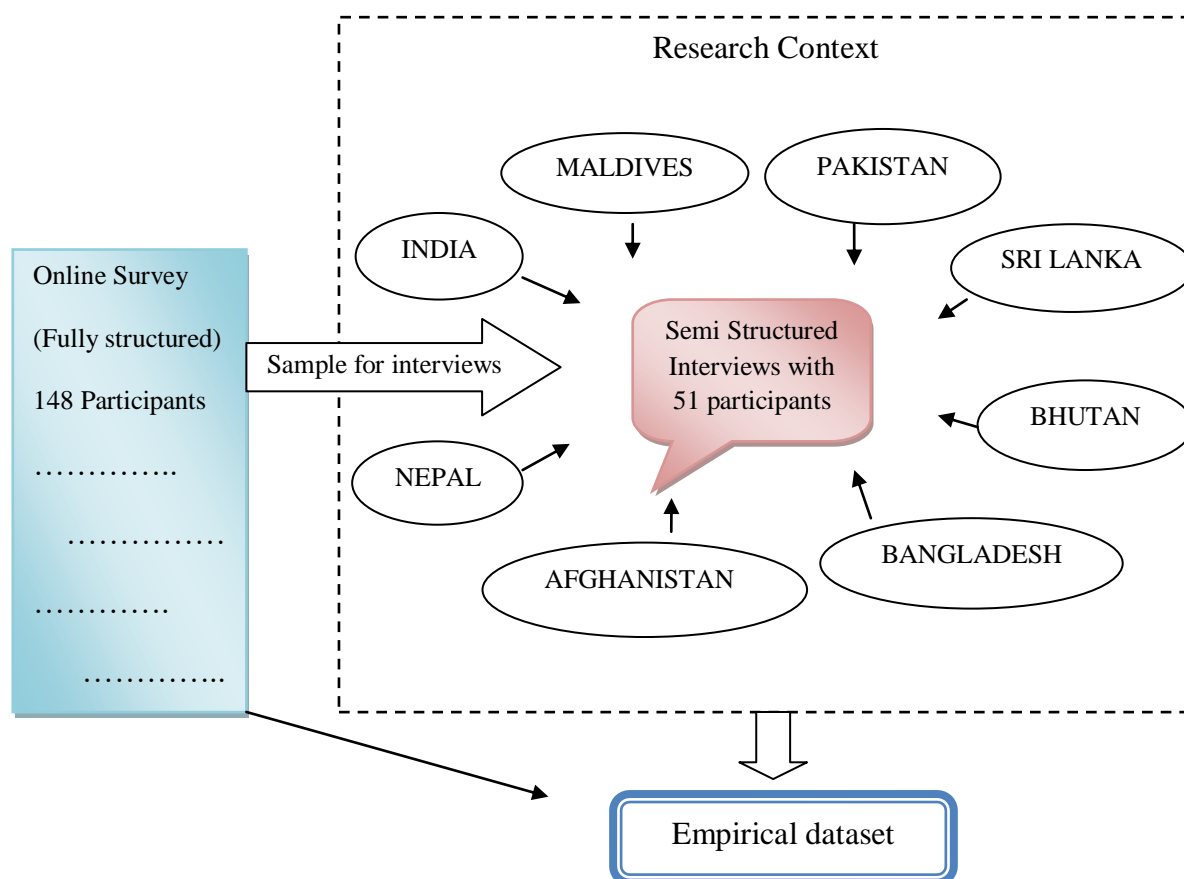
<sup>5</sup> Total Survey responses were different due to non-response to one or more particular questions. In the table only 122 respondents actually gave details about their universities and 26 respondents ignored this question but completed rest of the questionnaire.

concerning student migration in Australia, and Qing (2008) collected 1288 survey responses, followed up with 10 case studies in an ESRC project (Bass, 2009; GU and Maley., 2008). Unlike other studies which have struggled to provide a representative sample (e.g. Rounsaville, 2011:152; Nomanian, 2008:74), this study employed a mixed method design. Similar approaches have been used by many scholars, suggesting that this investigation follows an accepted convention (e.g. GU and Maley, 2008; Ayano, 2006; Sondhi, 2013; Ashikaga, 2010).

#### 3.4.4- RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

To achieve internal validity and an adequate response rate, two subsequent research instruments were developed, 1) a fully structured online survey and 2) a semi-structured interview schedule. Particular attention was paid to the function and role of each tool to facilitate integrated data gathering, which strengthens the internal validity of data by offering cross-examination and validation. In this regard, the function of the online survey was to develop a context in which the qualitative study could be further explored and to recruit participants for interviews (See Figure 6).

Figure 6-RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS





#### 3.4.4.1- FULLY STRUCTURED ONLINE SURVEY

The role of a structure online survey has been exploratory with a particular focus to identify and recruit participants, extend the sample size, identifying themes and developing the context for the qualitative investigation to follow in interviews. In designing the survey, I firstly reviewed previous research, which had dealt with similar challenges (GU and Maley, 2008) and then developed the online, fully structured survey using Survey Monkey. The survey contained 47 questions, including ready answers, multiple choices, and open-ended questions. This was intended to gather a range of information. The survey had to be fully structured and therefore did not allow for the flexibility necessary to suit all possible individual answers. Respondents did not answer all questions in several instances. This meant that I was not able to use the data in connection with a small number of themes that subsequently emerged from the qualitative data. The survey began with a compulsory question to record participant consent. This acceptance would apply to all parts of the study if they opted to continue their participation. Students were able to miss out questions if they felt that they were not relevant to them. At the end of the survey, they were asked to record whether they would be happy to participate in a qualitative interview. Allowing students to omit questions resulted in some questions having a different number of total responses which prevented the numerical comparison of replies between questions but which made little difference in statistical tests. Despite its weaknesses, the survey enabled me to develop my knowledge of the research context and guided the subsequent qualitative research. A preliminary analysis of the results of the survey is given in the last section of this chapter (See 3.4). The survey questionnaire can be seen in Appendix-D.

#### 3.4.4.2- SEMI-STRUCTURED QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

I designed a semi-structured interview schedule to generate qualitative data. The questions were open-ended, and the schedule included prompts to allow me to adjust the focus of the interview as it progressed. The interview schedule covered four major areas of the participant's life. 1) The interview began with questions relating to the interviewee's personal history and family attributes previous education and family finance, and the quality and status of their previous academic life. These questions helped me determine the level of embodied Capitals and attributes for each student. The interview schedule also included issues relating to the interviewee's motivations and reasons for choosing to undertake their studies in the UK, their decision-making process, and their visa application process, including the use of agents and any difficulties that they experienced. 2) The

second part of the interview schedule was designed to explore interviewees' academic experiences including; their participation in university life, their experiences of university services and support, any difficulties and challenges that they experienced in making academic progress, and their satisfaction with their time at their respective universities. 3) The third part of the interview schedule was designed to explore mobility and immigration issues, including the reasons that interviewees gave for their decision to study abroad, difficulties that they experienced, and their prospects for learning in the UK. 4) The final part of the interview schedule was designed to explore interviewees' experiences of term-time working. This section focused, particularly, on the reasons why interviewees took on term-time employment, their experiences at work, the benefits of their jobs, the impact that their term time employment had on their academic studies, along with their level of satisfaction with their jobs. This last section of the interview was crucial as it helped me explore the perceptions of participants about immigration changes around student visas, the impact of these changes and any consequent feelings of insecurity. The interview schedule enabled an open conversation with participants and the contribution of the qualitative interviews to the overall study has been tremendous, helping me to explore the emerging issues in contemporary student life that are explained in coming chapters. See Appendix -C for the detailed questionnaire.

#### 3.4.5- DOING RESEARCH: ACCESS AND ETHICS

I aimed, initially, to collect 150-200 survey responses and undertake 25-30 qualitative interviews, as I was unaware of the size and nature of study population I was drawing upon for my sample. Before commencing the research, I discussed ethical issues in detail with my supervisory team. I obtained ethical approval from the university ethics committee and followed all relevant procedures to ensure the legitimacy of the research. As part of this process, participant information sheets and consent forms, survey and interview questions, were developed, reviewed and approved by the research ethics committee. Before starting data collection, I struggled to get help not only from sampled universities but also from my university. The Student Union (SU) at my university failed to respond to several requests I made to put me in contact with the SUs at my chosen study sites. Without the official support of my university and SU, the universities sampled, and their Student Unions were reluctant to believe in the genuineness of the project. Student Union desks and display boards did become useful places to display information about my research, but university staff showed no interest in actively helping me to disseminate information about my

research to potential participants. I, therefore, had to work alone to recruit participants, gain access to study sites through security gates, access eligible participants, and conduct the fieldwork.

I began by writing to and contacting Student Unions, International offices and information centres of the sampled universities with the hope of getting support in conducting the research. This strategy also was unsuccessful. I, therefore, followed two parallel strategies: (1) identifying possible study sites and then visiting them in person, and (2) building a social network on Facebook by making friends with, and becoming members of groups of students from South Asia, in sampled universities. I visited university support services and Student Unions with well-prepared printed literature, including pamphlets, flyers, and study information sheets to ask for help in recruiting participants. Again, this strategy resulted in disappointment. There were several obstacles to overcome in approaching research participants, including gaining access to university premises, which required me to have a student membership ID for that particular university, identifying the status of students at the University, persuading university services to help in the identification of the participants, and collecting data in ways that complied with all ethical considerations. On the positive side, all of my initial efforts meant that I became familiar with the geographically vast field of research, and learned that there were only a few places where potential study participants could be contacted, which would maintain the legitimacy of data sources, including libraries and on campus canteens.

To overcome these obstacles, I chose to focus solely on University libraries. This helped me to avoid recruiting members of the public (i.e. non-students) because university libraries required valid University membership to get in, and only genuine students could present these IDs. I used my SCONUL access to gain access to the libraries where I then distributed study information in person and used notice boards to invite eligible students to take part in the study. Despite having been given verbal permission to walk into premises and using my SCONUL access ID card to pass through electronic security gates, I sometimes felt myself to be an outsider in these locations. I was looking for international students to recruit to my study, which, at the time, was a heated political issue in the country, and this sometimes left me feeling anxious. Nonetheless, this process turned out to be an opportunity to familiarise myself with university services, facilities, and locations and ultimately led me to talk, informally, with potential participants. As a result, I was able to contact, persuade, and collect a number of responses. The whole process of identifying

and recruiting students from each of the chosen universities was very time consuming and expensive. It also proved difficult to engage students in the study due to their hectic schedule and the lack of any financial reward being offered for participation. To speed up and facilitate the recruitment process, I offered a £20 reward for each participant who agreed to participate in an interview after, they had completed the survey. This slight alteration helped me recruit more participants in less time and with less effort. All participants had to complete a survey and at the end, indicate whether they would be willing to take part in an interview, for which they were entitled to get £20. The consent to the study was recorded, both verbally in the interview and electronically in the survey. It took more than eight months and several visits to each study site to contact respondents and collect data.

Being an international student in the UK for the first time, many aspects of conducting research in the UK were alien to me, particularly research ethics. I had never heard about ethical procedures in social research in India or been required by law, to follow them. Undertaking the research, ethically, required me to safeguard participants' physical and emotional well-being, as well as maintaining their privacy. I felt that these were hard to achieve. Being an outsider, I was not in a position to secure a place in which I could conduct the interviews. This problem was intensified due to the number of study sites, their distribution across London, and a lack of help from the universities. I, therefore, conducted interviews, wherever possible, in a quiet place in the library or open access rooms to maintain the participants' privacy. I also found the process of persuading participants to take part in the study difficult. Whenever I spoke to a potential participant while they were sitting or walking, on their own, they showed interest in the study, and many of them ended up participating in interviews. However, when students were in a group, I experienced the opposite reaction. I realised that the group mentality was a big influence on the decision of students to participate, with many students walking in-group saying that the study was not relevant to them or simply that they did not desire £20. However, at London South Bank University and the University of Greenwich, I had a positive experience with two groups. I was able to conduct interviews with each of the members of the group in a series, one after the other. Once students had agreed to participate, I experienced further difficulties caused by their busy schedules, and I often had to chase them to get survey responses and to conduct interviews. The majority of participants preferred to participate in an interview on campus, which delayed the process and forced me to visit campuses frequently. I also had issues with anonymity and confidentiality, both

new concepts for me. The majority of participants did not expect me to keep their opinions confidential and allowed me to record their voice. Some participants who were studying at London Metropolitan University did not want me to disclose their identity as their responses revealed bad experiences at their university. I always promised that the privacy and anonymity of their responses would be assured. To ensure confidentiality of responses, the majority of interviews took place in a secure space in the respective library. Preferable locations for interviews were isolated locations where participants could share their good and bad experiences at their university without fear of being watched or overheard. Later, responses were anonymised and they remain confidential.

My role and responsibilities while conducting research consisted of protecting and safeguarding respondents, achieving transparency, ensuring a fair process of recruitment and an equal opportunity to take part freely, in the research. In doing so, I was helping them out with the research process and making them aware of ethical requirements as well as taking advantages of being from same culture and ethnicity to gain trust and building confidence with respondents, in particular with females. Apart from conducting the survey, organising and conducting interviews were important as they provided me opportunities to listen, observe, and understand participants' personal experiences and perceptions. I always started a conversation with potential respondents by asking one simple question: 'Are you an international student?' When they replied, 'yes', I then asked, 'Where are you from?' The answers to these two questions functioned as inclusion or exclusion criteria. I approached students based on my judgement as to their South Asian accent, their look and way of expression, and invited them to take part after satisfying the inclusion criteria. I was slightly cautious when discussing sensitive questions, such as labour market performance and prospects of getting a job in Pakistan, as it is a developing country with security issues. Nonetheless, during the period of data collection, I made many new friends from countries that I have never been to and with people that I had never met before. I felt blessed to have the opportunity to record students' narratives that are now frozen in time, telling a life story of a student in a foreign land.

#### 3.4.5.1- THE ETHICS AND ROLE OF FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

The geographical spread of study sites, complexities in access and actual recruitment, time constraints, a busy schedule of the participants, and general lack of support from the sampled universities made it difficult to recruit eligible students to achieve an adequate

sample size. In response to these challenges, £20 was offered to participants ready to give interviews following successful completion of the survey. The incentive for participation became inevitable as the project was at risk of failure due to limited and skewed participation. The direct and anticipated impact on the recruitment of participants was noticeable and grew substantially afterwards. Despite the practical advantages of incentives to increase participation, there are ethical issues concerning participants' well-being and safety. Compared to clinical studies where financial incentives can result in health risk and serious harm to participants, in social research, it can lead to skewed samples as it may attract more low-income participants or it can affect their judgement about consenting to the study. If this is the case, payment in the research could have a controlling or irresistible influence over participants and might affect their ability to refuse. Scholars are concerned with this practice due to its coercive effect (Wertheimer and Miller, 2007; Ripley, 2006). However, this study involved incentives to widen participation and was not limited to low-income participants. The offer was just £20, enough to compensate participants for their time and contribution to the study. Grant and Sugarman (2004) reflect on the ethical debate, which considers financial incentives either coercive or undue. In the case of this study, the incentive offered was not meant to harm participants. Also, it did not affect their decision to take part or ability to refuse to participate in the study. 147 participants took part in the survey voluntarily while the incentive was used to compensate only those who took part in interviews, for their time and efforts. Furthermore, not all participants were interested in money as a group at London South Bank University refused to take it. Therefore, the use of incentives does not fall into the ethical trap and was beneficial to both the study and participants.

#### 3.4.6- REFLECTION ON ETHNIC CONNECTION BETWEEN RESEARCHER AND RESPONDENTS

The experience of conducting interviews was a valuable part of the investigation. Interviews took place face to face mainly, on either campus or, in the case of females, on Skype and were arranged to be held at a date, time, and location that was most convenient for respondents. Instead of adhering strictly to the interview schedule, the interview developed more like a conversation, to allow the respondents to lead the dialogue around their personal experiences of studying and living in the UK. I provided some context for each of the questions to make it as straightforward as possible to receive respondents' views on them. In many cases, I felt empathy with the participants that came from being an

international student myself. This personal connection led to many of the participants becoming friends, and I am still in touch with many of them now. In one particular instance, many participants in a group at London South Bank University refused to accept the £20 after discovering that I was paying the incentive myself. This happened because I shared the cultural values and ethnic origins of the study participants, which turned out to be advantageous, contributing to the quality and richness of the interview data. I come from a lower-middle-class family in India, pursuing a research degree in the UK with the hope of producing advantages back home, just as the majority of the study cohort did. Having spent a large part of my life in Indian society, I was very aware of cultural diversity, differences, and value systems in South Asia. Apart from common backgrounds, I shared a similar status, as student migrant, facing challenges in and out of university, while progressing academically and developing my career trajectory, just like other participants. This similarity often shaped my decisions during the entire research process. For example, I was able to select genuine participants by looking at their cultural traits, accent, and personal appearance, and be sensitive to the beliefs and reservations of students who belonged to a particular religion or were women.

The power dynamics between participants and me was neutral, and the self-positioning of both remained parallel throughout the research process. I positioned myself in interviews as a facilitator while being careful of the way interview was progressing. Working along with interview schedule, I was able to probe into issues or concerns that arose from interviews, as I was aware of participants' cultural and social background. Likewise, cultural familiarity helped me developed themes while analysing data. In summary, I made use of my own experiences, as well as training, to conduct the research ethically. The similar background particularly influences the interview process in which participants tend to position themselves as friends, sharing their personal narrative with someone from home. Being an insider, I was able to build a trusting relationship, which helped me to exchange thoughts with respondents while keeping their cultural reservation in mind. I realised the fragility of the delicate bond between researcher and respondents, which is not independent of their social and political environment and that despite sharing similar cultural values, we were still carrying differences on various levels. I approached participants from Pakistan and females, in particular, with caution, due to the tensions between India and Pakistan and the possible, sensitive, personal information regarding family and their income, paid work, relationships with family and friends, especially among vulnerable participants (e.g. strugglers). Qualitative methods are criticised, as well

as praised, on this very personal, subjective ground and this study is no exception to this methodological dilemma. Participants took the liberty of similar ethnic origins to position themselves in the interviews and led the discussion by adding their personal views, beyond the scope of interview schedule, making it conversational rather than simply a Q and A session as suggested by Abbas (2006:322). Participants seemed to recognise the opportunity to record their concerns or voice. Apart from special care when dealing with female participants, the study cohort did not expect me to adhere strictly to the confidentiality of their views. They used phrases such as ‘you know’ or ‘in our society’ to connect me in their response, assuming that I already know what is like to be a student from South Asia. Similar backgrounds put participants in comfort and they take interview more seriously as this becomes an opportunity to share their story and concerns. Participants welcome questions and respond without hesitation, even raising issues or complaints.

The advantages of sharing a background were, comfort and building trust in the relationship, the interview become personal, assuming that we already know each others’ feelings, resulting in sympathetic relations being built during the interview. We were not only sharing a common background but also similar notion of ‘otherness’ while in the UK. We were not only part of the similar pursuit of knowledge or academic transition in the UK but there, following social, biographical trajectories with different assets and support. The feeling of biographical similarity led me to think about how student life was becoming a project more than a profit or loss account. However, there are limitations on making use of cultural or ethnic familiarity and I could not take it as granted. Despite having similar ethnic and cultural heritage to that of the study cohort, I knew little about the social-political context of South Asian countries, other than India. My limited understanding of the unique dynamics of other parts of South Asia placed constraints on my imagination’s ability to envisage participants’ relative experiences and perceptions regarding their life in the UK. Being Indian, I could not assume what is like to be from a nation facing political and economic challenges unlike those in India. As we shall see in chapter 4, inequalities persist in South Asian nations on various levels, which advantage some students over others. I learned later, for example, that students from small or politically unstable countries in South Asia normally take longer routes and use regional options to strengthen their skills to succeed in the UK, a pattern which I discussed under the heading of ‘step migration’.



#### 3.4.6.1- THE STRENGTH AND LIMITATIONS OF SHARED BIOGRAPHIES IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH:

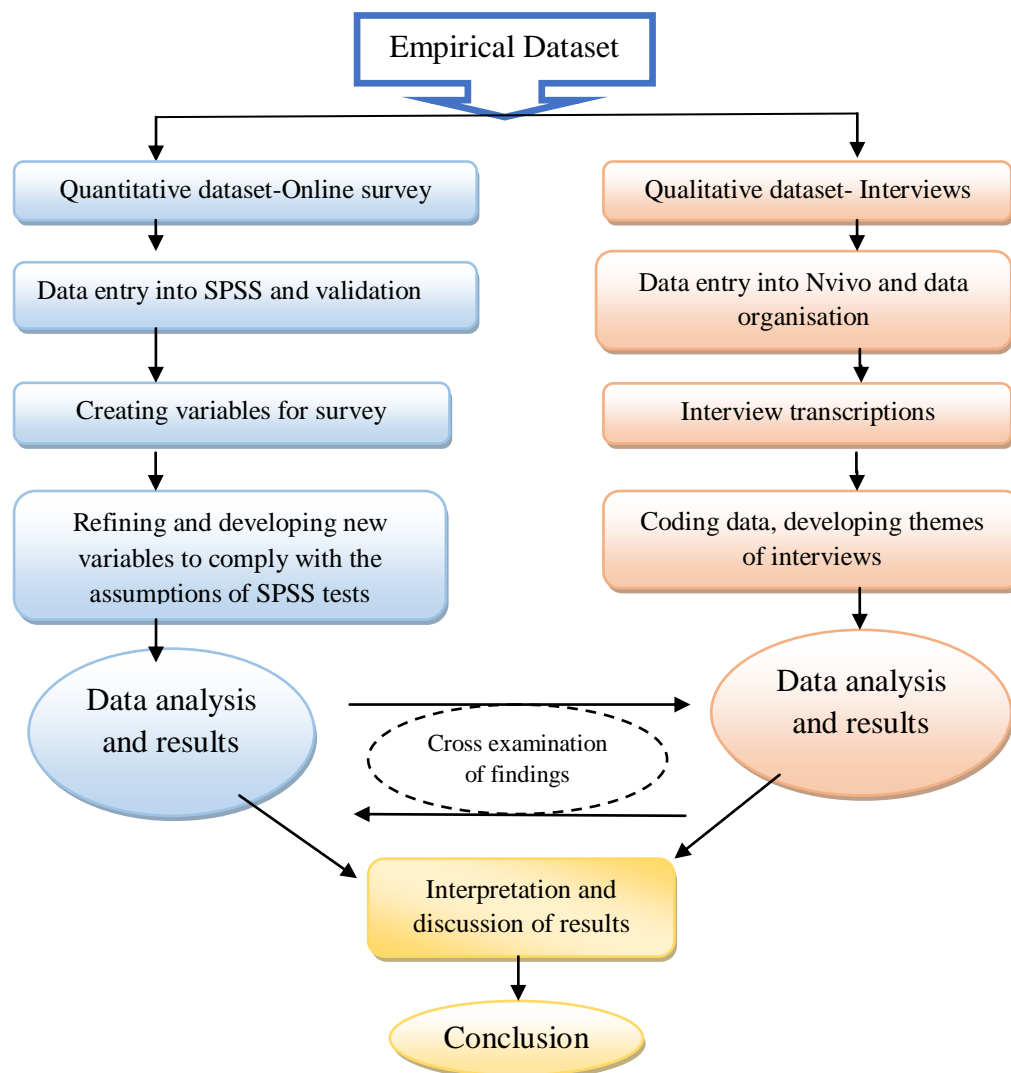
Epistemology is the theory of knowledge and relates to the process of 'knowing' in qualitative research. This involves the interaction between researcher and respondents during the interview and its potential effects on research outcomes. 'Ethnic matching,' as explained by Tahir Abbas (2006), has been a methodological concern in social research in which data gathering during the interview is affected by similar ethnicity and culture that bring researcher and participants together in the knowledge production. Abbas (2006) suggests this similarity in the background could potentially benefit, as well as negatively affect the outcomes of research. The strengths of such shared ethnicity are understood in the light of researchers' awareness of ethnic realities, which reduce the potential for stereotyping and lead to better use of resources to the benefit of data collection (Abbas, 2006:325). It is argued that it is much easier to gain trust and obtain an authentic account from participants belonging to ethnic minorities if the researcher represents similar cultural traits (Amos and Parmar, 1981). In addition, being aware of the emotional and personal care of each other while taking part in the construction of reality, respecting values, and cultural reservations, while taking a position in interviews and reducing the chances of misleading or misinterpretation of responses, could also be taken as advantages of shared ethnicity in research. In contrast, concerns over the effects of such similar origins on the research process have been raised in the light of peoples' changing ethnic identities, values, perceptions, intellectual and social changes, over time, which may lead to different views on the subject of research beyond researchers' ethnic perceptions. It is argued that cultures also have their own sub-cultural differences, which could be neglected by the assumptions of the researchers' ethnic understanding (Abbas, 2006). In addition, differences between researcher and respondent based on personal belief, cultural reservations and, as Abbas (2006) has indicated, political ideologies, could limit the prospects of the positive effect from shared biographies (Abbas, 2006). Nonetheless, the influence of shared ethnicity in qualitative research remains a topic of debate that urges qualitative researchers to proceed with care when making use of their 'insider role' while maintaining methodological obligations to remain 'outsider'.

#### 3.4.7- DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

Most of the data was in a digital format, including the online surveys, interview recordings, and social media profiles. These datasets required the use of computer-assisted software to

process and analyse them efficiently. I used SPSS and Nvivo software to process the quantitative and qualitative data respectively. The survey data required manual data entry with validation to ensure that the data entered was identical to the online database on survey monkey, while the interview recordings required manual transcription. I found both of these processes exhausting and time-consuming, but important in reducing human error in analysis.

Figure 7-DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS



It was a straightforward process to import data directly into Nvivo. To develop themes, initial data analysis was carried out which intensified as themes continued to develop. The primary purpose of the survey was to establish the context for the subsequent qualitative inquiry. Therefore I discuss the survey results first, and then I present a deeper discussion of the qualitative data analysis about each of the cases. I try to synthesise the results in a way that allows the discussion to be coherent and productive. Given the primary purpose of the survey, the majority of questions asked lacked the strength to meet statistical

assumptions. The nature of the data was either ordinal or nominal, rather than the ratio in measurement, which limits the possibility of running a robust statistical analysis. Despite this, Chi-square, which fits with the nature of the survey data, has been used where possible, to establish an association between responses and to support the findings from analysis of the qualitative data.

### 3.5- THE SURVEY: ROLE AND RESULTS

The survey has been designed and used, on the one hand, to outline the context of the research in which qualitative data could be best presented and, on the other hand, to extend sample size. In so doing, the survey serves a limited, exploratory role rather than being seen as providing a complete answer to the study questions. In this sense, the survey aimed to explore basic trends and key themes in the data that furnish evidence or information to develop extensive analysis and assist in making sense of the experiences of the study cohort in detail. There are reasons for adopting a survey with this specific role, including the unknown population of the study cohort, the lack of access to information, the ethnic and demographic diversity of the group, the geographical spread of the study population in London and methodological issues relating to the combined presentation of mixed method data. Moreover, as explained earlier, the survey gathered data have some weaknesses, which limit its scope to combine with qualitative data. Therefore, the analysis largely relies on qualitative data than a survey, or their equal mix. For these reasons, the survey data and its primary analysis have been presented here before engaging with the Qualitative analysis, which provides an opportunity to look at the emerging patterns of experience of the study cohort. These preliminary findings of the survey enable us to make sense of the qualitative data and help us understand individual experiences within the broader contexts developed through survey analysis.

#### 3.5.1- SURVEY RESULTS

Apart from nationality and age group, a further distinction could be drawn because of family background, resources, and participants' choices of academic discipline. The majority of the participants had already qualified with a Bachelor's degree or another, lesser qualification (86/131) and some, with a Masters Degree or higher qualification (45/131) before beginning their education in the UK. Additionally, the majority of participants were enrolled in a postgraduate, taught program (77/120), while a smaller

number 17/120 was enrolled on a research level course, Only 14/120 were registered at an undergraduate level. The disciplines in which they were enrolled were diverse, with a heavy concentration in business and management studies (49/118). Others were enrolled in Sciences (14/118), Humanities and Social Sciences (13), and Engineering and Technology subjects (7/118), and a small number of other disciplines. Regarding professional experience and skills, 31/129 had worked permanently, at some point, before studying in the UK while 25/129 had part time jobs and 15/129 were engaged in a family business in their home country. The majority of respondents did not have any employment (58/129).

Parents' education and their occupations were unevenly distributed across the sample. Participants' fathers were well educated (52/130 below Bachelor, 40/130 at Bachelor, 33/130 at Masters and 5/130 research level), participants' mothers were less so, (81/129 below Bachelor, 32/129 Bachelor, 13/129 masters and only 3 at the research level) and fathers were occupied either in higher professional jobs or ran a family business compared to mothers who were, most often, in housewife roles. Family finances were also unevenly distributed across the sampled cases. Based on the monthly income level, I classified families in four groups. 1) Families with less than £500 monthly income (51/127), 2) families with a monthly income of between £500-£1000 (50/127), 3) families with a monthly income of between £1000-£1500 (16/127), and 4) families with a monthly income of more than £1500 (10/127). This suggests that the majority of the participants belonged to middle-class families compared to a smaller number coming from a financially stronger background. In combination, these facts seem to indicate that participants have very diverse backgrounds with a mixture of personal and family characteristics, which differ from one another. Despite the limitations of the survey, the analysis does seem to suggest that the participants who belong to low-income families have different academic motivations than those who are from high-income households. Similarly, parental education and occupational status seemed to have played a role in putting students on the right paths to academic success from the very beginning of their schooling. To assess this, the sources of funding when living and studying abroad appear to be crucial. The data suggest that participants were heavily reliant, in financial terms, on family (82/115 for a living and 93/118 for fees) and external sources e.g. bank loans (49/115, to cover the cost of living and 54/118 for fees) to fund their living and studying in the UK. Only a few participants had been able to secure grants (18/115 for living and 17/118 for a fee)<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> The survey question related to contribution actually is a multiple response question meaning that a respondent can choose more than one given options. Therefore total of individual responses sometime exceed

Apart from students' family and academic backgrounds, the survey data reveals differences in the experiences of participants at their respective universities and employment. According to the survey, the majority of participants considered themselves to be average achievers (52/120), followed by those who count themselves as more than average (37/120), compared to a few (15/120) who considered themselves to be excellent achievers. A small number (11/120) considered themselves as underachievers in their class. As a supplement to this inequality, a clear difference has been recorded between those who imagine their performance to be better than their counterparts' (13/111) and those who do not (36/111). Many accepted this, in their case, to be partially true (44/111), while some were unable to compare themselves with others, to assess their performance, at all (18/111). This division defines the difference in personal abilities, use of resources and transitional difficulties that affect some more than others do. There is also evidence in the survey data to support the idea that being different is a result of having a different combination of the resources and support that participants would have required. Finance was a dominant concern of most participants, whether regarding finding paid work or being actively engaged in term-time employment. There was a general pattern of being employed during term time amongst many students from low-income families. The reasons for choosing to undertake paid work were given as, primarily, supporting the cost of living and paying university fees. A further analysis of income from work and the nature and advantages of work varies depending on whether participants are part of an advantaged or disadvantaged group. Survey data relating to the purpose of studying abroad, in particular in British education, has revealed a diversity of reasons, which include; avoiding the disadvantages of education at home due to a lack of quality education (36/125), domestic social, economic and political conditions (19/125), not being able to access elite or employable education at home (36/125), ease of access to international education (10/125), and affordability of western quality education (10/125). In contrast, reasons which could combine as the social demand for quality education, include participants' belief in the employability of a foreign qualification (76/125), the influence of family and friends in choosing to study abroad rather than at home (54/125), and being accepted as adding value to their social status (29/125). Work opportunities during and after studies were given as another advantage (58/125), but it is unknown whether this relates to supplementing a student's financial stability or contributing to their employable skills.

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the total responses to that question. The responses are therefore actual number of respondents choosing a particular option.

Many participants (74/123) have accessed British education to achieve degrees while the majority of them considered their education is part of the career development (92/123) and some have attended it due to their interests in the field of study (43/123). Also, some participants viewed taking up British education as an opportunity to advance their skills by learning the English language (41/123), gaining personal independence (28/123), and incorporating a new set of cultural values. Participants with a different purpose for studying abroad may make different decisions, for example, whether or not to engage in term-time paid work, whether to choose a low or high-cost study programme, and whether to move on to a particular career path e.g. continuing to do research. To summarise, participants had different motives for choosing to study abroad, which separate them from one another due to the different trajectories they would opt to follow to achieve their intended purposes. On the positive side, the study cohort seemed to be progressing academically and was largely satisfied with their overall experiences at university, and in the UK. Similarly, those who worked in the UK had positive experiences and were satisfied too. However, the experiences of participants do not seem to be linear; rather they involve ups and down during their time in the UK. Many required access to support and resources to adjust to the demand of British education, as well as to overcome the difficulties that many reported<sup>7</sup>. To resolve them participants received support, more often, from their contacts, including family and friends, rather than from university services. This suggests that participants with privileged backgrounds should be in a better position and have better opportunities than those who belong to middle-class families.

Drawing on the difference explained above, it makes sense to me that not all participants in this study are the same or achieving similarly. The differences in participants' personal and family traits could lead to different experiences, which, in turn, would lead them to follow unique pathways, distinct from others. Although the study cohort perceived British education as a means of producing advantages in the form of personal qualities and improving chances of being employed and gaining social status, it seems that to approach these future outcomes, participants follow different paths, creating diverse narratives that involve different access, possession, and use of material and social resources that have been helping to shape their narratives in their home countries, as well as in the UK. There

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<sup>7</sup> The positive influences over study and life in the UK indicates a clear dependency on personal and parental networks of support, while lack of friends and family related issues impacted them negatively. Financial matters and the need to supplement living costs and fees by paid work, were common among the many difficulties reported.

is no way of knowing from the survey, how well participants achieve in British education, but it seems apparent that there must be differences in academic achievements between underachievers and excellent performers, which relate to participants' perceptions of future outcomes. Despite the limitations of the survey data, the study cohort does seem to represent a group of individuals who are coming from diverse backgrounds that seem to be working towards different goals and different outcomes at the end of their time spent studying abroad.

### 3.6- CONCLUSION

This study uses a methodological design that combines survey, as an exploratory tool to develop the context of the research, and qualitative interviews to collect enriched data to inform the lived experiences of study participants. Also, I used a 'snowball technique' to approach participants to deal with an unknown population. The rationale behind adopting this method has been to benefit from merits of qualitative and quantitative methods to improve the quality, accuracy, and reliability of the findings. The geographical spread of the study cohort and difficulties in accessing them led me to combine methods in a way to help increase the sample size by using an exploratory survey while probing into in-depth case studies using interviews, to gain a rich understanding the experiences of student migrants in the UK. In doing so, the survey was employed to extend the scope of recruiting participants from a large population spreading across the sampled post-1992 universities, and to narrow down the sample size for interviews. The survey was designed primarily, to function as an exploratory tool to cover a large unknown population of students from South Asia in London and to develop a context to help me investigate the personal experiences of participants through interviews. The methodological choices of this study, including study population and study location, relied on the facts that could be seen in the literature. As we already have seen in chapters one and two, student mobility between South Asia and the UK is claimed to have become problematic and trends of student mobilities from South Asia to the UK have started failing. The growing literature is claiming Non-EU students in the UK have become vulnerable to the effects of recent student immigration reforms in the UK, which makes this group worthy of investigation. In locating the field of research, London proved to be most appropriate location, mainly due to the heavy concentration of Non-EU students in the new, post-1992, British Universities. In addition, the geographical spread of the sampled universities across London helped to reduce selection bias while their proximity made it easier to organise and provided the perfect opportunity to conduct

research. The integration of qualitative and quantitative data could not be achieved completely, yet where possible; survey data has been supportive of the arguments and extends the prospects of the generalisation of findings from the qualitative data. The chapter also acknowledges other limitations of the research process, including the generalisation of the findings and the nature of the survey data, as nominal and ordinal, which limits its statistical strength. Nevertheless, despite all the odds, the chosen methods have resulted in the generation of an enriched, reliable, and robust dataset.

Conducting this research has been a complex process, involving designing a research tool, recruitment of participants and dealing with delicate issues such as ethics while gathering data and presentation of findings. I collected data from 148 survey responses and 51 interviews following standard ethical procedures. In doing so, after several unsuccessful attempts to achieve a substantial sample size, I strategically offered £20 to participants willing to participate in interviews, to overcome the risk of failure and the shortage in response rate. This step raised a number of ethical concerns regarding the monetary influence over responses, the legitimacy of, and bias among participants. Not all participants were interested in being rewarded for their participation. Also, I offered this reward in the middle of the study, thus, earlier participants had not received money for their responses. The similarity in ethnic and cultural background between participants and me influenced the quality of data in many ways. Whether it was a case of identifying genuine participants or gaining their trust, cultural familiarity helped provide the comfort and personal care that participants needed during interviews. This emotional and social connection developed, based on shared ethnic belongings and an awareness of the differences that exist within South Asian societies. By taking advantage of common biographies, I positioned myself in the interview as a facilitator in data collection while participants tended to position themselves as a friend to me, who discussed their personal experiences openly. The effects of a shared background, on interviews, largely contributed to minimising the communication gap and misunderstanding of responses and helped me understand experiences in their real social-cultural context, which becomes a methodological advantage by placing qualitative narratives in a concrete context.

The chapter discusses the findings of the survey at the end, to provide the context in which interviews are thematically analysed. The preliminary impression of the survey suggests the role of family aspirations and personal resources, including material and symbolic, has been shaping personal biographical trajectories through participants' time in the UK. They



reported a variety of experiences leading to evidence of the heterogeneous nature of the study cohort. This contrasts with the widely held perception of homogeneity in Asian international students. Furthermore, it has emerged that on various levels, differences in personal and family attributes present participants with the possibilities of progressing on different trajectories or career paths, in turn, leading to unequal and different outcomes. The factors that contribute to such distinctions include material, personal, and social resources in combination with the participants' personal drive to achieve their individual goals through studying abroad. This finding has been further analysed in chapter 4. The survey data leads me to question whether the differences in resources or achievements, that differentiate participants from one another, has anything to do with the use of British education in producing unequal outcomes for socially different participants. Exploration of the qualitative data, as set out in the later chapters, will help to understand this issue.

### 3.7- CONTRIBUTION

The contribution of the chapter has been to widen the theoretical perspective of the methodological rationale that tries to bridge the qualitative and quantitative divide by adopting a survey as an *exploratory* tool to facilitate qualitative analysis. The use of a survey to develop a context for interviews is a unique approach to enrich the quality and reliability of data gathered. This strategic use of a survey provides a practical solution to ease the dilemma of mixing methods, often faced by scholars. The chapter draws our attention to the need for new ways of researching student migrants because access to this part of the migrant community is difficult and researching their experiences even harder because the greater reliance on qualitative methods limits the scope of generalisation of findings.

The chapter reflects on the typical process of researching migrants' experiences. In doing so, it contributes to understanding the difficulties in access to international students and the researchers' obligations to the ethical procedures in which he uses his ethnic background to identify, persuade and conduct the study and by showing the merits of being an 'insider' than 'outsider' in migration research. This is done by the researcher using his own ethnic understanding, particularly by sensing participants' individual character e.g. accent, and appearance as a strategy where the embodiment of culture in destination among foreigners does not dilute their ethnic identities. This insight into the use of ethnic knowledge in recruitment is unique. Likewise, regarding position taking in the interview process, shared

ethnicity between the researcher and respondents has been turned to the benefit of data collection as the researcher become a facilitator inviting participants to position themselves at the centre of the discussion. This approach to conducting interviews neutralises power dynamics in the process and erodes the disadvantages of an authority/expert position, which may be taken by the researcher. Instead, the researcher handed over the lead to participants by allowing them an open space beyond the scope of the qualitative questionnaire, which is again a product of the investigators' understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. In doing this, the study contributes empirically, by reflecting on the researchers' position '*between spaces*,' with an inclination towards being an insider, as suggested by Dwyer and Buckle (2009). Thus, the study presents an example of situating the (researcher's) self in spaces between positionalities in the interview process to help avoid bias and the influence of the researchers' knowledge of race and ethnicity. In addition, the chapter contributes empirically by underlining the influence of ethnic background on the choices that researcher tends to make. This includes the origin of the research itself which is again a construction of researcher' own world. The research background presented in this chapter reflects on the influences of the researchers' self-reflection in originating the need to research. Similarly, choices (e.g. concerning field and study cohort) that researcher seems to make are also not free from his (my) own perspective of being an international student studying in the UK.

The chapter also makes an empirical contribution by reflecting on the researchers' responsibilities to care about participants' well-being and safety when I intentionally chose the interview location e.g. university library, to ensure the welfare and safety of participants. At the same time, I arranged for many female participants to take part in interviews online, to ensure their comfort. This is due to the personal needs of participants linked to their gender role. The chapter also explains the ethical stand of the researcher in offering incentives to participants for recruitment. Being aware of the effects of such incentives on participants and research outcomes, the researcher used incentives as a last resort to rescue the research project from failing to achieve an adequate response rate. To respond to risks of incentives being 'Undue' (Grant and Sugarman, 2010) or 'Coercive' (Wertheimer and Miller, 2008), payment was given only to those attending interviews, to compensate for their time and valuable inputs. This practice exemplifies the care and responsibilities for the researcher to follow in future studies.

CHAPTER 4 – MAPPING STUDY  
ABROAD TRAJECTORIES:  
UNDERSTANDING THE VARIETIES  
OF STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES

## 4.1- INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces four distinct types of trajectories of students' experiences studying abroad, based on the pre-existing, but largely ignored, heterogeneity in the international student population. These trajectories are based on students' social-cultural location and the various forms of capitals that help them to negotiate, mobilise, and accumulate their cultural, economic, and social capitals in a way that enables them to overcome the challenges that they face in the UK. The purpose of this chapter is to portray the individual difference through trajectories that distinguish study participants from one another to signify their unique personal competencies, abilities, aspirations and strategies that then result in unequal projection of future outcomes. The study presents experiences of studying abroad as a part of a student's life trajectory involving a wide array of possibilities and pitfalls, which yield a certain set of experiences throughout their international education.

The chapter begins with a review of the literature to understand heterogeneity in student migration, by highlighting differences within and between South Asian countries and their socio-cultural dynamics, together with the geopolitical context in which mobility decisions are taken. Using this background, the concept of trajectories and their use in migration literature has been discussed to explain how these differences result in diverse mobility experiences. In doing so, the chapter: 1) introduces four types of trajectories- as a conceptual tool and theoretical metaphor- developing among respondents, to highlight social, biographical process throughout their life-course, including education abroad, 2) explains the ways in which respondents strategically approach capital accumulation for their own advantage, using culture, social and economic capital, 3) presents exemplary case studies to operationalise these trajectories, and 4) contributes by interpreting these trajectories in relation to the sociological discourses of social class, inequality in academic outcomes, and social reproduction.

## 4.2- THE HOMOGENEITY IN STUDENT MIGRATION: EVIDENCE FROM SOUTH ASIA

There are eight countries in South Asia situated in the Indian subcontinent, including; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, the Maldives, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka (Khadria, 2008; Agrawal, 2008). The region is home to many ethnic communities, a birthplace of religions (e.g. Sikh, Jain, and Buddhism), inhabited by ancient civilisations

(e.g. Indus Valley) and covers a vast geographical area (Bose and Jalal, 2004). Historically, the region has witnessed the rise and fall of many empires, invasions, and the creation of modern nations after the colonial period. Regardless of common historical legacies, democracy, according to Jalal (1995) has been successful in India, while failing in Pakistan or Bangladesh. Similarly, the region has long been regarded as a unique geopolitical area, combining diverse faiths, cultures and social values, and ways of life into a cohesive communal harmony and co-existence (Gardner and Osella, 2003). The homogeneity among South Asian societies and cultures could be assumed mainly due to their shared past and geographical proximity, facing similar economic and political challenges (e.g. Corruption, struggling to grow economically, demographic pressures, facing poverty, gender disparities, widening social inequality), being the third world and coming together in SAARC. Regarding the nexus of education development, all nations have been facing problems in higher education related to its capacity, quality, and access, resulting in 'student migration' as part of the wider trend of brain drain or skilled migration. From this perspective, a culture of migration' appeared to be a national characteristic in almost all South Asian countries, whether it is a matter of brain-drain, student or skilled migration because of structural and operational problems, or forced migration mainly due to civil war, political instability, poverty, ethnic conflicts or terrorism (Zamindar, 2007; Shah, 1995). It is important to look at country-specific factors in facilitating 'student migration' to assess the homogeneity claim. Based on country-specific factors, I put them together into four categories for the purpose of analysis - 1) Highland countries, 2) Standalone countries, 3) Troublesome countries and 4) Leading regional country.

#### 4.2.1- HIGHLAND COUNTRIES: NEPAL AND BHUTAN

Nepal and Bhutan, situated in the remote highlands of the Himalaya, are small landlocked countries with limited resources and have a stable, but the small economy (Whelpton, 2005). People living in these remote mountains are known for their honesty, sustaining cultural identities and developing a self-sufficient way of life e.g. Bhutanese idea of Gross National Happiness (Adler, 2009). With a long history of monarchy, both nations have adopted democratic governance, which suits their historical legacies e.g. Nepal has become a federal, parliamentary republic and Bhutan has become a unitary, parliamentary constitutional monarchy. This adoption, however, has seen a violent political transition in Nepal. Nepal and Bhutan, in many respects, are at a disadvantage due to geographical

barriers, underdeveloped service sectors and slow industrialisation, resulting in huge unemployment, greater dependency on agricultural activities and production for livelihoods, and capacity problems in providing access to primary and secondary education. As a result, both are mostly reliant on foreign aid and regional cooperation to build economic capacity and strength (Dorji and Kinga, 2013). An overarching issue, persistent in both nations for decades, has been 'the culture of migration' (Sharma et al., 2014; Subedi, 1991; Valentine, 2012a and 2012b). A substantial portion of the young population chooses to migrate for a better life in either, nearby states in South Asia, or in western nations using, foreign education as a vehicle to become mobile.

Globalisation, despite cultural resistance, has started influencing the social and cultural dynamics of these societies, particularly in initiating the social demand for quality education, which has long been unavailable, domestically (Ghimire and Axinn, 2006; Des Chene, 1992; Collins, 2012). Despite the rise of private education at the primary and secondary level, higher education remains a state responsibility and has been suffering from a lack of finance and a limited infrastructure (LaPrairie, 2014; Carney, 2003; Caddell, 2007; Bhattarai, 2009). These nations also have limited resources to set up academies of excellence or invite international education providers to help in filling the gap in the national education system. The serious inadequacies in national education and its low return in the local labour market seem to influence the choices and decisions of middle-class families to seek educational advantages abroad and settle there (Paudyal, 2016; Pherali et al., 2011; Phuntsho, 2000). Consequently, 'student migration' becomes a large subset of migratory trends, which is growing rapidly (Ghimire, 2013; Gartaula, 2009; Ghimire and Upreti 2012; Wangyal, 2001).

Nepal has witnessed a long political struggle and instability affecting educational institutions and pushed people towards migration in seeking livelihoods and the many, advantages available through study abroad (William and Pradhan, 2009; Adhikari, 2010; Rappleye and Paulson, 2011; Tiwari, 2010). In this regard, young Nepalese studying and migrating abroad is well documented. Bhutanese people share a similar endeavour even though the country is well known for the achieving 'happiness' at home (Ezechieli, 2003; Adler, 2009; Yezer, 2016). The local education systems have failed to cope with the growing demand for quality education in both nations, in one way or another, leaving young people to migrate. The student migration, therefore, provides an opportunity to escape such institutional incapacities and often, is linked with permanent migration to destinations elsewhere. However, in a recent trend, return migration has begun to occur,

yet this is largely in a situation where it is difficult to accommodate people in the local labour market. This creates a social crisis for those who have obtained a foreign qualification but where there are questionable labour market opportunities available locally.

Regarding destinations, western English-speaking nations are most favoured; however, not all students, with a local education, are capable of securing places in top Western universities. Students with limited resources, in the face of the above challenges, tend to prefer a strategic step-by-step move by choosing regional study options (e.g. India, Pakistan or Bangladesh) to acquire the academic skills needed to access western universities (Sharma et al, 2014; Dongaonkar and Negi, 2009; Yeravdekar and Tiwari, 2016). This phenomenon of strategic ‘step migration’ has been missing from the ‘student migration’ debate and fails to recognise the role of regional forces in shaping international student migration. The open border policy between Nepal, Bhutan, and India, as well as India's approach to regional cooperation, lie behind the developing trend of ‘step migration’. This is discussed later in section 4.2.5 and in section 5.6 of chapter 5.

#### 4.2.2- STANDALONE COUNTRIES: SRILANKA AND THE MALDIVES

Sri Lanka and the Maldives are Island nations located to the south of the Indian subcontinent, in the Indian Ocean. I call them ‘Standalone’ due to their physical setting and uneven geography, consisting of a number of islands, which limits their prospects of economic and social integration. These nations have unique colonial legacies and democratic history that need to be taken into account (Sriskandarajah, 2003); however, the two have had entirely different trajectories of development. The modern history of Sri Lanka, a multi ethnic-religious island, has witnessed a 30 year long period of civil war (1983-2009) and ethnic conflicts, giving rise to many social-economic tensions that still influence contemporary life in an ethnically divided nation (Goodhand, Hulme and Lewer, 2000).

Unlike other nations, Sri Lanka has been using education as a political means to disadvantage ethnic-religious minorities in favour of the Singhalese. In doing so, the eradication of private education and schools, imposing certain policies to preferred languages that favour Singhalese in gaining access to education and government jobs, were strategic stands through which the government aimed to tackle ethnic aggression from

other groups, particularly by Tamils. Due to civil war and conflict, the socioeconomic dynamics of Sri Lankan society suffered considerably by exacerbating youth unemployment, gender, and ethnic wage differentials among youths in conflict. The disparities in educational policies and practice could be seen in the growing demands for private education in the absence of national educational opportunities for a large portion of marginalised ethnic groups (Tamil). However, in a strategic move, private education was forbidden by the government, in 1961, in an effort to dismantle colonial legacies. The rise of 'international schools,' which were established on Sri Lankan soil using loopholes in the legal system, helped fill the gap in educational supply created by biased policies. English based education privileges positional advantages in securing white-collar professions historically in Sri Lanka, thus these international schools gained attention from privilege seeking families (Wettewa, 2013). International schools became popular for their academic offering, which includes experiences of culturally diverse classrooms, advanced curricula, English language as the medium of instruction and academic facilities that were unavailable in national education. However, these schools tended to facilitate social stratification as their fee structure favoured students with a privileged background, thus allowing elite students to accumulate privileges (Wettewa, 2013). In this vein, despite free education to all from grade one to university and the existence of international schools, social inequality has grown worse over time in Sri Lanka. Educational opportunities through both the national system and international schools have become inaccessible to families trying to secure educational advantages for their children (Ranasinghe and Hartog, 2002). The internationalisation of education has come to the rescue of thousands of middle-class families marginalised by tough competition to access education in Sri Lanka (Evans and Little, 2007). In addition, youth unemployment due to 'credentialism' (Salih, 2002), ongoing ethnic conflicts and violence in Sri Lanka (Gunatillaka, Mayer, and Vodopivec, 2010), together with gender disparity in education and its labour market return (Gunawardena, 2003) also contribute to people choosing study abroad as a last resort. In effect, migration, both political and economic, is now accompanied by fresh trends of educational migration. However, there is a serious lack of studies, which describe such trends.

Compared to other neighbours; the Maldives is made up of over 1190 small, low-lying coral islands with an uneven population, spread over 200 islands (Ali, 2006). Studies reflecting national life, including social, cultural, and economic situations are not abundant. Thus, our current knowledge about the Maldives is also limited by the lack of



information. Existing evidence suggests that the Maldives faces challenges in providing quality education throughout the country, due to variations in infrastructure, resources, and standards of education between urban and rural parts of the islands (Maniku, 2008). Community run and government funded rural schools are inadequate and are of a low standard compared to the capital city 'Male' (Waheed, 2013). This is despite having equal access to education at primary level; thus in 1999, the government devised a policy of 'clustering schools' to overcome disparities in the delivery of quality education which was found to be less effective in achieving its primary goals (Ali, 2006). Quality assurance in the education system is pursued in the Maldives, not only by national and local stakeholders, to protect the public interest and social demand of internationalisation of education, but also influenced by globalisation and neoliberal pressures from world organisations (Maniku, 2008). Also, as Ali claimed (2006) the geographically scattered islands, with poor transport and communication services, together with the pressure of a growing population and unprecedented catastrophes, e.g. tsunami in 2004, have been presented as constraints to economic development (Ali, 2006). To investigate the use of information and technology (ICT) in higher education to overcome the various challenges, Kinaanath (2013) has identified factors that limit the adoption of ICT in teaching and learning in the Maldives. These include- 'limited technological resources and willingness to use them, financial constraints, environmental issues at campuses with no culture of using ICT in teaching and a spoon-fed pedagogic approach' (Kinaanath, 2013). The impact of globalisation and the presence of international education in the Maldives is missing due to a lack of reliable sources, just as we have limited understanding of migration from Maldives, especially educational migration.

#### 4.2.3- TROUBLESOME COUNTRIES: AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH

Compared to Nepal or Bhutan, Afghanistan (31.6 million), Pakistan (193 million), and Bangladesh (161 million) are relatively large nations with large economies and demographic advantages in South Asia. Apart from Afghanistan, the education system in Pakistan and Bangladesh represent a mix of government-funded, private and to some extent international education, offering educational services and goods at home via collaboration and online. The social and cultural dynamics of these nations also put them together in a religious bond where the majority of the population is Muslim and Islamic

style education has long been a part of the state-funded curriculum. On the negative side, political instability, ethnic conflicts and civil war, military rule and the failure of democratic institutions on various occasions, are undeniable influences on society and institutions (e.g. Education) in these countries. Education, in particular, has suffered from ethnic violence and civil war in Afghanistan and Pakistan, as rival groups (e.g. Taliban) seek to abolish modern education and replace it with Islamic education using Madarsa and Masajids schooling. The cultural/ethnic inclination towards Islamic education often influences national politics, thus initiatives to promote modern education are often criticised by conservative groups and occasionally are a source of ethnic tensions. This drawback of cultural inflexibility often exacerbates social tensions among families seeking advantages through modern education. Disregarding the so-called domination of Islamic education at primary and secondary level, tertiary level education accommodates much of the demand for education producing human capital, which is vital for economic development. Higher education provides opportunities for scientific and technical education, albeit underdeveloped and running with poor infrastructure, a faded academic environment, and lack of resources. Access, security, rural-urban and gender disparity, as well as quality concerns, are among the top challenges to Afghan academia (Baharustani, 2012).

In a country specific note, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has been devastated by war, Soviet invasion, ethnic clashes, and Taliban-led violence for decades, still fighting terrorism and conservative forces. Forced migration is now part of the reality, with displaced Afghans living on foreign aid in refugee camps in Pakistan and elsewhere. As Samady (2001) suggests, Afghanistan is a traditional, multi-ethnic, developing country stuck in ethnic conflicts, violence, and a migration-refugee crisis (Samady, 2001). Education, in particular for girls, has suffered considerably under the Islamic state and the Taliban. However, Afghan cultural values do not conflict with international attempts to modernise institutions, including education (Eggerman and Panter-brick, 2010). Regardless of all the devastation and ongoing ethnic violence, Afghanistan has a keen interest in education to rebuild the lives and living of people (Samady, 2001; Houte, Siegel and Davids, 2015). Higher education, in particular, became an instrument to distribute status in the society, where education has long been an exclusive privilege, hardly available to ordinary people (Daxner and Schrade, 2013). Graduates with foreign qualification are gaining recognition among local graduates within both state and private education (Baharustani, 2012). Due to an ill-resourced, poorly financed, and ethnically/religious

polarised state, education does not promise a great deal in labour market returns as the government is often reluctant to go against conservative ethnic forces to avoid the clashes and ethnic violence which have already traumatised communities in Afghanistan (Babury and Hayward, 2013; Eggerman and Panter-Brick, 2010). Religious education has been an unshakable basis on which common people take refuge in learning cultural values and morality (Karlsson and Mansory, 2002). Despite all the devastation to Afghan society, the left-behind middle class seems to favour private and more employable education than a traditional one, to secure advantages in the ever competitive and problematic local market (Daxner and Schrade, 2013). Private HEI's, for example, American universities, are thus used to generate 'symbolic capital' as a status symbol (Daxner and Schrade, 2013:20)

In a similar case, but not as severe as Afghanistan, Pakistan, the home of many ethnic groups with a Muslim majority, was created in the name of Islam in 1947. The ethnic-religious dynamics undermine public and private efforts to bring about change in education, leaving it a severely neglected part of national life (Khan and Mehmood, 1997; Ashdullah, 2009). Moreover, Khan and Mehmood (1997) hold feudalism and elites responsible for years of neglect. Pakistan is a nation divided by a feudalistic political and social structure, while India and Nepal are divided by caste. Educational inequalities can be seen in differential access by class and gender, together with disparities in the English medium, private education exclusively accessed by elites, and the public education provided in Urdu for the rest of the population (Malik and Courtney, 2011). Pakistan faces deficiencies in educational standards and quality, together with poor infrastructure, underinvestment and mismanagement, resulting in stress and dissatisfaction among both students and staff at the University (Yusoff and Khan, 2013). Corruption, party politics, and the inclination towards religious education to benefit political agendas lie behind this (Memon, 2007; Hayward, 2009). *Madrasah* and *Madaris* come as a last resort to families in localities with no public education. However, their religious outlook and Islamic fundamentalism often contradict the ongoing national and international efforts to rescue the education system in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Hathaway, 2005; Choudhari, Iqbal and Gillani, 2009; Dean, 2007; Hayward, 2009). The serious lack of opportunities and socio-political conditions in Pakistan have been found to be behind the migration of highly skilled - temporary or indefinite- to Western host nations (Imran *et al.*, 2011; Sheikh *et al.*, 2012). Following internationalisation in Asia, Pakistan too strives to raise educational standards to become a host nation for international students (Tarar, 2006). As Zakaria *et al.* (2016) state, the government's effort to establish educational hubs has resulted in a limited

amount of student inflows from neighbouring countries, particularly on cultural scholarships and other grants (Zakaria et al. 2016). However, it is still a challenge for Pakistan in the decades to come.

Bangladesh, on the other hand, grew out of Pakistan in 1971 and is a high density populated nation facing poverty and demographic problems along with a low literacy rate and large scale youth unemployment. Migration, therefore, is perceived (by people) as a way to become respectable by gaining social recognition and material abundance (Rao and Hossain, 2012). The education system is composed of both state funded, Islamic style education at a primary and secondary level and a parallel public schooling system open to all which follows a state governed syllabus. The education system suffers from problems related to access, capacity, and quality, at all levels. Access to primary and secondary education tends to disadvantage a large proportion of the population due mainly to extreme poverty (Ahmed et al., 2007). The obsession with religious education-*Madarsa and Madris*- has been associated with the need of a basic education for those who cannot afford to access state-funded education, or in an area where state education is unavailable (Ahmad, 2004; Ahmed et al., 2007). However, these religious institutions are often targeted for their alleged role in producing Islamic militants, jihadists, and promoting sectarian violence and terrorism (Ahmed, 2004). The urban-rural divide in educational access, gender disparities and a serious lack of finance to expand education, lead government to be reliant on foreign aid to support primary and secondary level education and the international import of higher education in private sector (Ashraf, Ibrahim and Joarder, 2009; Naher, 2006). This liberal approach to widening access to education has led to creating more choices for families concerned with education, as well as to help stop Bengali youths being brainwashed by religious hardliners. However, the neoliberal shift in higher education in Bangladesh has resulted in the privatisation of university education, with a commercial approach contributing to 'Credentialism' (Kabir, 2013). Furthermore, the public-private divide in higher education widens social inequality, as poverty is still a national challenge, and has an exclusionary effect on access to education. Moreover, while public universities are facing a funding crisis, the business of private universities is on the rise (Islam, 2011; Khan et al., 2012). This inequality in access to higher education could be associated with student migration from Bangladesh, as students either do not have access to quality education or use their privileged education to pursue study abroad that, in turn, facilitates the social mobility process (Hossain and Zeitlyn, 2010).

#### 4.2.4- LEADING REGIONAL COUNTRY: INDIA

India, with the world's second largest tertiary education system and one of the fastest growing economies, has enormous potential for becoming a regional academic hub. However, there are many obstacles in becoming so. Despite pressure on providing education to an ever-increasing population, the Indian education system- particularly tertiary- is facing problems regarding both capacity and excellence. The Indian education system has been coping, on the one hand, to ease access to people of lower caste and socially disadvantaged groups, while on the other raising the educational standard to keep up with the demands for quality education. The Indian education system is largely recognised as "*islands of excellence in a sea of mediocrity*" (Altbach, 2014) combining both state-funded elite (e.g. IITs, IIMs and AIIMS) and general education. There is tough competition for admission to elite HEIs due to their academic excellence and standards compared to general education, which lacks both quality and adequate infrastructure.

Access to education, and its product 'credential,' has played an exclusionary role in widening social inequality in India (Unni, 2008). The caste system and the religious majority-minority divide in India privilege access to educational advantages for Hindu upper castes at the expense of Hindu lower castes and religious minorities. As Deshpandey has argued, the Hindu upper caste is most likely to secure a place in the national elite institutes offering academic experiences of 'first world' education at the cost of 'third world' (Deshpandey, 2006). Consequently, the only the privileged few can secure admission into state-run elite institutions while many are turned away while the majority of students and their families experience the effect of 'massification' and 'credentialism'. To make India a just society, reservations (reserved places for disadvantaged groups) in access to education, public sector employment, and democratic institutions have been introduced, as well as continuing efforts to expand education at the primary and secondary level. However, these initiatives do not seem to help India in achieving its desired educational flagship, at least in South Asia. The caste based reservation filters access to the state elite institutes for medicine, science, and technology, aiming to support disadvantaged communities, yet, in practice, it has contributed to widening social divisions and inequalities (Deshpandey, 2006).

Apart from access issues, scholars also identify disparities in the language of instruction, different educational initiatives, policies at the state level and political reluctance to welcome foreign interests to provide direct education or investment in the sector. This

uneven distribution of educational opportunities bi-polarise states where those in South India have been able to maintain English and quality that attract students from other states in India and abroad, while states in the North fail to do so (Ashdullah and Yalonetzky, 2012). As a result, interstate educational migration persists and a small number of states gain at the expense of other states (Chandrasekhar and Sharma, 2014). In addition, Murthy and others (2007) have identified barriers to the Indian education system that includes, traditional curricula, exam based evaluation and a lack of quality teachers, poor infrastructure and under-resourced facilities. They also pointed out the political reluctance to give autonomy to institutions, inadequate funding, bureaucratic governance and corruption (Murthy et al. 2007). Also, education, at all levels in India, is primarily sponsored and funded by Indian states, and private supply of education is still not fully developed. The foreign import of education is not welcomed due to distrust in its commercial outlook. However, limited initiatives have been undertaken to connect India with global educational providers, e.g. foreign partnerships, joint-degree programs, franchised arrangements in parts of the education system. Due to this shortcoming in educational delivery, the demand for quality education among the fast-growing middle class remains unfulfilled and thus tends to push families into choosing study abroad options and contributes to an ever-growing pool of student migrants seeking class advantages.

#### 4.2.5- THE TRENDS OF STEP MIGRATION IN SOUTH ASIA

Regardless of the structural and operational challenges discussed above, India has a reputation for hosting international students from abroad, particularly from neighbouring countries. As discussed earlier in chapter 1 (section, 1.4.1), for families in other South Asian nations, which face many constraints to accessing standard education, if not quality, India has been a welcoming place to be. The majority of incoming international students are sponsored by either the government or the exchange programmes and usually attends the universities of southern Indian states with a small number in Delhi and other metropolitan cities. India, as a secular nation, with political-economic stability, and having a large young population as 'demographic dividend', is at an advantage compared with other South Asian countries. In this respect, India has much to offer its neighbours to reinstall an educational capacity, strengthen the economy, and offer 'brain gain' in the age of migration. By providing near home access to cost-effective educational opportunities,

India has adopted an unprecedented role of being a ‘stepping-stone’ for bright students and their families to become mobile and seek a better life beyond South Asia.

Chapter 1 explains the regional flows of students from neighbouring countries to India except for Pakistan (Government of India and UNESCO, 2014:7). As Table-1 shows a significant number of students from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Nepal, and Maldives undertake their education in India. This is part of student mobility trends linking regional and international destinations (UIS, 2016). There are many reasons to why students from small and problematic nations in South Asia prefer education available regionally and I have explained these variations in chapter 4.2. Compared to India, other South Asian nations struggle to cope with the many challenges and thus find it hard to satisfy the expectations of their middle-class families and youth. Indian educational infrastructure and access to cost effective study options hence, come to the rescue of those families pursuing class advantages through the Indian education. By providing fairly standard, cost effective and close to home educational opportunities, India not only becomes a favourable regional study option but also, a stepping-stone. Undeniably, India seeks to play an active role in regional development by helping neighbour countries. It has open borders with Nepal and Bhutan, providing easy access to education and employment. Similarly, India offers scholarships and educational spaces for their brightest students to help them develop the essential ‘soft skills’ and linguistic competence required to become successful, far away, in the west. The role of India in shaping the process of ‘*Step Migration*’ has not been recognised by scholars in earlier research. However, it is of equal importance in understanding how skilled migration from problematic nations in South Asia is formed. There is a serious lack of information on other South Asian nations about their active role in step migration and it could be assumed that Pakistan and Bangladesh may be hosting international students from nearby states too, but we cannot be precise about the trends, due to a lack of evidence.

#### 4.3- CONCEPTUALISING ‘TRAJECTORIES’ IN STUDY ABROAD

There has been a growing trend to examine individual migratory process in education, particularly the social-biographical aspects of student migration (Carlson, 2013), and students’ emerging roles as family members, is a potential vehicle for family migration (Water, 2008), political activists, global citizens and so on (King and Raghuram, 2013). In this pressing need to associate the wider family and biographical milieu with ongoing

migratory decisions and experiences, the term '*Trajectory*', which is a metaphorical expression of movement and progress through time and space, is repeatedly used. The concept of 'trajectory' is now used successfully in explaining personal narratives shaping development throughout the life course, including study abroad and beyond.

Previously, the term has been used to explain socio-cultural adjustment and adaptation to foreign cultural values in educational settings abroad (Burnapp, 2006; Wang, Wei and Chen, 2015; Brown and Holloway, 2008). It has also been applied to indicate 'uneven mobility experiences' (Marcu, 2015), the effect of academic failure on social mobility (Byrom and Lightfoot, 2013) and multiple transitions through education and work (Devadason, 2007). Similarly, Kim explains occupational trajectories in the global positional competition (Kim, 2016). These attempts, however, have been limited to addressing a particular aspect of student life in transition and are lacking a rigorous approach to embedding mobility experiences into wider life course routes. Scholars seemed to undermine individual aspirations for mobilities and embed their biographical accounts into universal trends. In contrast, the current approach gives preference to the discussion of the 'developing self' through study abroad and extending its context by including prior social, biographical, and cultural investment in self, largely regarded as life trajectories or 'self-projects'. In this vein, the growing use of trajectory is evident in the acceptance of the heterogeneity of student populations both at home and abroad. Since scholars are urged to distinguish unique, individual narratives, emerging through a geographic-educational mobility nexus, the concept 'trajectory' seems useful as it represents a route map- linear or uneven- linking family and personal traits with current achievements or failure, to make sense of potential future mobility intentions.

Conceptually, the notion of 'trajectory' is being used to reflect a process of change in 'self' over time, linking family aspirations and resources that influence early life experiences to help individuals becoming mobile and continue with ongoing and potential routes into future mobility trends. The use of trajectory, as a typical metaphor, is an indicator of progression used in educational settings and has enabled scholars to demonstrate actual and potential routes and ways in which one can utilise opportunities for self-development. In doing so, Findlay et al. (2012) have been able, successfully, to make sense of 'social reproduction' by linking the social-cultural context of the educational mobilities and the quality of secondary education leading students to choose international education and further on, to decent positions in the labour market. It is argued that educational mobilities



are inseparable from the wider life trajectories of students, combining achievements both before and after such mobilities. As Findlay et.al. (2012) suggests:

“Globalisation of student flows cannot be isolated from wider mobility trajectories, both before and after study. It appears that a world class education for some is embedded in a mobility culture that attaches symbolic capitals to the very performance of international living and that aspires to engage in international career trajectories that some might see as a hallmark of the transnational capitalist class”  
- (Findlay et al., 2012:128)

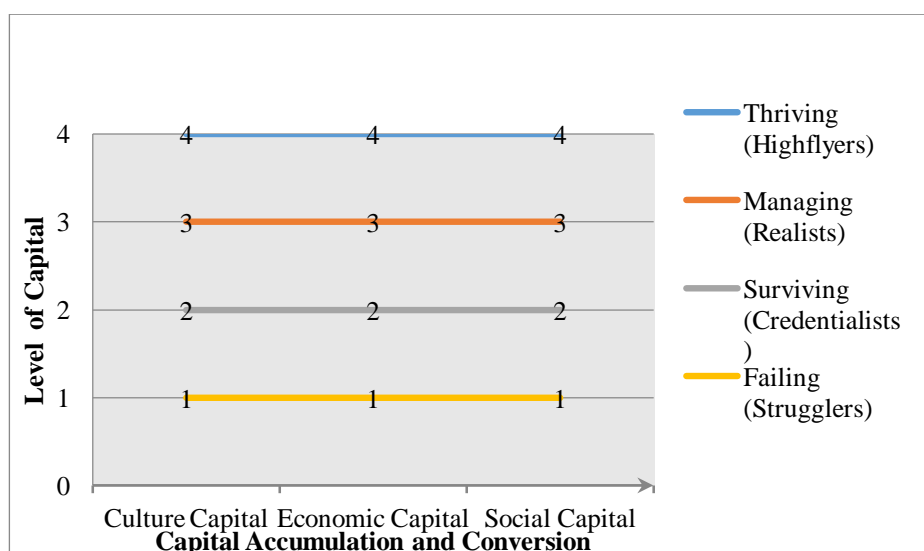
It has emerged in the literature, that study abroad is a part of the grand narrative of individual progress which includes previous family and social/cultural investment in self to become mobile for education abroad, and further to facilitate intentions to reproduce advantages by simply returning, migrating to other places or going on to international career trajectories. This approach offers a unique insight into the process through which resources are mobilised and deployed as a strategic response, to overcome the challenges, which emerge during study abroad. Also, the trajectories could be very personal as well as indicative of communal practice in groups. Such trends could also be grouped and framed in developing typologies of students, to make sense of the distinctions, which exist in student populations. In doing this, Brown, Hesketh and Williams (2004) presents two ideal types- the ‘*Players*’ graduates who approach labour market aggressively, while the ‘*Purists*’ who deploy conservative approach. Similarly, Choudaha, Orosz and Chang (2012) develops a unique typology of student migrants, using academic prepared and financial capacities of the US-bond international students as- *Highflyer*, *Explorer*, *Striver*, and *Struggler* (Choudaha, Orosz and Chang, 2012). Similarly, Shannon-little (n.d) draws five types of trajectory- *Settler*, *Discoverer*, *Adventurer*, *Collector*, and *Miner* (Shannon-little, 2012). Such classification has some useful implications in explaining diversity in student populations studying both locally and internationally. This study follows a similar fashion and develops four types of trajectory segmenting study cohorts into *Highflyer*, *Realist*, *Credentialist*, and *Struggler*; by using culture, economic and social capital and their accumulation, transmission-conversion to secure and reproduce advantages in British higher education.

#### 4.3.1- DEFINING TYPES

Based on the biographies shared by study participants and explored through interviews, this study proposes four distinct types of trajectory that are typically represented by four types of the student identified in the study cohort. I call these; ‘*Highflyer*’, ‘*Realist*’, ‘*Credentialist*’ and ‘*Struggler*’. The typology is a theoretical and idealised construction to

help us understand social biographical differences and personal style of capital accumulation. The typology proposes the 'ideal type' of how foreign students' progress and experiences are distinctive, due to the variation in the level and forms of capital, they inherit and possess. It reflects an accumulation and conversion process throughout the study in the UK, to symbolise how people strategically approach to educational advantages. The ideal trajectories explained in Figure-8 assumes that high levels of cultural, economic, and social capital are more likely to enable students to perform well and therefore, to have a positive experience. In contrast, very low levels of these capitals and their poor conversions are less likely to help students to achieve success during and after their studies. This means that amount and level of capitals largely dominates the success or failure of students studying abroad. However, this is also dependent on personal effort, purpose, and situational factors. In the typology of trajectories (Figure 8), numbers 1-4 represent the weight and amount of each form of capital, whilst linear trajectories are presented to demonstrate that if a particular student obtains greater numbers in each form of capital, it means that they possess enriched, higher, and more valuable amounts of capital that can benefit them enormously. In these cases, they should be recognised as '*Highflyers*'. Lower numbers of each form of capital are indicative of a relatively low or poor amount and quality of each form of capital, which does not seem to help students in progressing through the British higher education system.

Figure 8-TYOLOGY OF TRAJECTORIES AMONG SOUTH ASIAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE UK



Source- Qualitative interviews

Figure 8 presents an '*idealised, theoretical*' model to represent four types of trajectories taking place among the study cohort. This is a cross-sectional presentation of the level of

capitals, together with the accumulation of three major forms of capitals - culture, economic and social capitals- resulting in varieties among the study cohort and their distinct experiences. The trajectories are drawn across time and space, consisting of accumulated sets of Capitals and their dynamic convergence throughout the participants' lifespan, as well as the perceived outcomes assumed by the students themselves. The trajectories are developed by the interaction of the level of capitals (indicated on the left side of legend) with capital accumulation, and the conversion of capitals over time (indicated at the bottom), which propels them towards perceived/likely outcomes (indicated on the right side of the diagram). The above ideal model hypothesised that if and when the right amount of capitals in each form are in operation, together they create a linear path of progression, leading to a particular type of outcome. Therefore if an individual possesses a high quality and amount of capitals s/he is more likely to have 'thriving' experiences with no, or fewer, difficulties in study abroad and could end up being *Highflier* - developing a trajectory of success. In contrast, poor quality and amount of capitals could lead to 'failure' in study abroad and end up with a student being classified as *Struggler*. Between these two extreme scenarios, the majority of students would have more or less level capital and overlapping modes of accumulation, thus they could either be 'managing' well or 'surviving' in the educational process abroad. Using the perception of such participants, I called them *Realist* - having a real sense of advantages accumulated through study abroad and determined to (re)produce actual and potential advantages, and *Credentialist* – primarily pursuing western degrees with or without academic excellence.

Ideally, the trajectories are 1) *hierarchical* in nature, with Highflyers being at the top and Strugglers at the bottom; 2) *relational*, where each trajectory distinguishes themselves from others to signify distinctions; 3) *embedded* into a wider biographical-life trajectory, linking pre-existing and ongoing ways of capital accumulation and conversion with a relative future progression, and 4) *indicative of capital accumulation* during study abroad, through which capitals are being deployed, mobilised and converted into one another in a way to benefit the study participant. At an operational level, trajectories assume four levels (in numeric terms) of capital: low (assigned as 1), essential (assigned as 2), and adequate (assigned 3), and high (assigned as 4). For instance, the immigration requires prospective students to have an essential level of capitals at the point of entry, particularly culture and economic capital, to ensure positive outcomes of study abroad for the international students. Therefore, an international student has to demonstrate that they possess these minimum levels of capital (e.g. academic background, linguistic competence, and financial

stability to support studying and living abroad). Students possessing an essential level of capital are more likely to achieve success in education compared to those who do not demonstrate them. I label them Credentialist and Struggler due to their limited vision and perception of education abroad. Many students somehow managed to show possession of capitals, particularly economic, while in practice struggling to fund living and studying abroad, which subsequently became an obstacle to their successful academic transitions. Adequate levels (3) of capital are indicative of higher competencies, which enable the student to develop both a legitimate and successful trajectory; I call them, 'Realist'. Students are considered affluent or powerful when they are in possession of high levels (4) of capital in comparison to others, and I recognise them as, 'Highflyers'. These students have the best opportunity to make the most of their existing capital set, which is likely to contribute to their advantages.

Despite the above theoretical assumptions in constructing trajectories, the typology is not representative of absolute types of South Asian students in the UK; instead, it is used in illustrative terms. As such, not every participant in a given trajectory could be said to possess the same level of capitals, even measuring somebody's capitals could be debatable, but they could be located within the trajectories for their symbolic position in relation to other students. Two students who fall within the same trajectory are not necessarily similar or equal, but their experiences are grouped in a way that allows me to draw some useful conclusions. The typology, in this sense, is an idealised thinking tool, which can help us understand the differences in the study cohort and the various trajectories of achievements/failure taking place among participants.

#### 4.3.1.1- THE HIGHFLYER TRAJECTORY

The Highflyer represent the successful and affluent participants of the study cohort. They are the 'best and brightest' students, with high levels of ability and ambition. This type of student is adventurous and driven to achieve extraordinary success. Their ongoing and previous successful experiences are largely associated with their wide array of personal and family resources- abstract and material, which allow them to progress towards further achievements, both academically and in other aspects of their life. Theoretically, these types of students are rich in cultural, economic, and social capital and can perform very well academically. They are certainly at an advantage in comparison to other types of trajectory within the study cohort. Their positive experiences are, to some extent,

effortlessly produced through the automatic accumulation of the various forms of capital. Highflyers seem to fit best, with what Miller (2010: 203) termed the '*Consumer model*' of British education, in which students look for consuming experiences sold by British HEIs.

#### 4.3.1.2- THE REALIST TRAJECTORY

The Realist trajectory is representative of genuine, highly motivated, and focused students who typically wish to make the most of their class advantages through foreign education (Bourdieu, 1986). Academic success for them is the priority, and they have an expansive approach to learning which includes learning through employment and socio-cultural experiences. They usually take a practical approach to their studies abroad and try to maximise the advantages available to them by high levels of personal effort. Realists, do not take the advantages of study abroad as granted but are strategically accumulated by students themselves. The perceptions of this segment of the study group -about their experiences of studying abroad and the outcomes that they can achieve- are precise, carefully observed, and close to reality. Given such criteria, they are best described as 'Realist' and should be associated with the '*Skills model*' (Miller, 2010:202) in which skills gained, such as 'soft credentials,' through British education is paid greater emphasis than getting a degree or consuming experiences.

#### 4.3.1.3- THE CREDENTIALIST TRAJECTORY

The Credentialist trajectory mainly consists of students whose ambitions are limited to obtaining degrees and qualifications. Quite similar to the '*Credentialism model*' proposed by Miller (2010: 200) students and the university exercise their choice to generate credentials. Despite being focused on academic progress, achieving a qualification in western universities becomes their primary purpose. This group of students usually places little value on better educational experiences and actively trades capitals in favour of economic capital e.g. compromising study time for paid work. The students on this trajectory possess essential levels of capitals, which makes it difficult, but not impossible, to accumulate advantages leading to promising outcomes from their international education. This sort of student is more likely to end up surviving in the transition through British education, yet is far from achieving distinction in the way that Highflyers or Realists do.

#### 4.3.1.4- THE STRUGGLER TRAJECTORY

The Struggler trajectory represents the vulnerable, marginalised type of students with problematic access to, or possession of capitals. The poor quality, low level, and misrecognition of capitals of these students often drag them into the path of failure. The students within this category often struggle to progress or manage their studies and similarly, living in the UK. They also have less support from family and limited access to resources and other sources of support, which prevents them from overcoming challenges in adjusting to an alien educational milieu, becoming included in the host culture and accumulating advantages in and out of University premises. In the view of policymakers, many of these students are not legitimate and occasionally are regarded as ‘bogus students’ due to lack of financial, academic, or linguistic competencies; yet they somehow manage to travel to the UK. This type of student suffers from problematic experiences due to their lack of readiness, low confidence, and deficiency in the ‘soft skills’ that play an important role in the inclusion and successful transition in the host education system. They could best be described in Millers’ term, as students ‘just looking’ (without proper vision) for the benefits of a British education (Miller, 2010).

#### 4.3.2- DETERMINING TRAJECTORIES

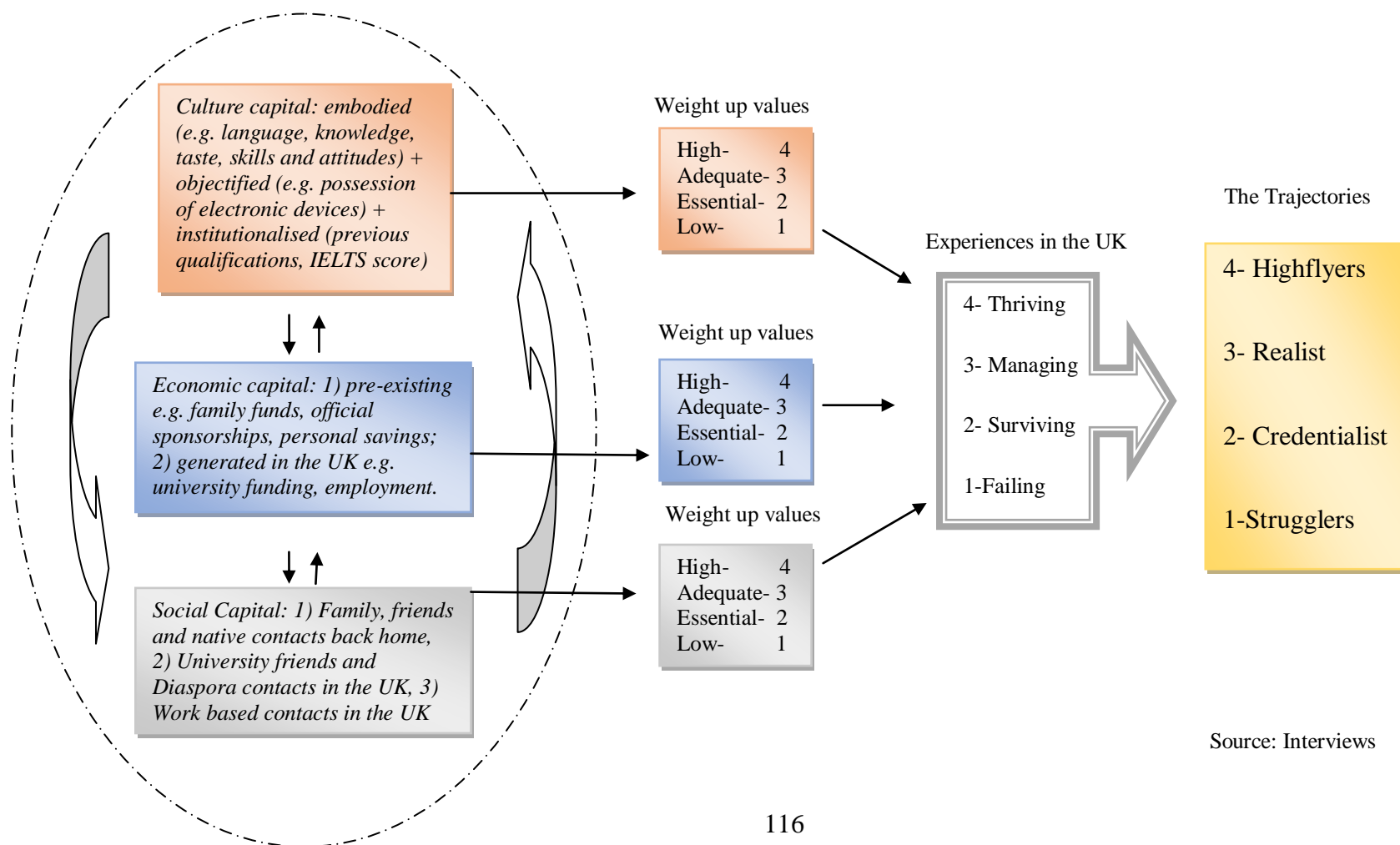
The most difficult task in developing these trajectories has been to operationalise Bourdieu’s notion of capitals. Since culture and social capitals are largely in the abstract compared to economic capital, it becomes challenging to compare the level of capitals among a variety of participants and show their interrelationship tangibly. Compared to the direct function of economic capital, scholars have been struggling to establish parameters and character which define culture and social capitals (Gaddis, 2013; Silva and Edwards, 2004; Veryonides, 2007; Sullivan, 2001; Wildhagen, 2010). In this regard, scholars encounter two particular issues; 1) what to measure, and 2) how to measure it. Gaddis (2013) uses four key measures to operationalise culture capital, which include, *museum visits*, *play attendance*, *cultural lessons outside formal education* and *time spent reading* (Gaddis, 2013:5). Van de Werfhorst (2010) added further to the list with; *going to a city trip on holidays*, *lifestyle preferences*, *e.g. playing elite sports*, *going on luxury holidays* and *ownership of luxury goods* (Werfhorst, 2010:166). Lareau and Weininger (2003) provide a summary of established use of capitals by scholars, which includes students’ *attitude* (interests in art, music, literature, and self-image as a cultured person), *activities* (taking part in art events and reading), and *information* (knowledge of literature, music and

art). They also list a variety of items used by scholars (all cited in Lauren and Weininger, 2003) including, 16 measures of students' participants in art and culture (Mohr and DiMaggio, 1995), *parental reading and cultural visits* (De Graaf, 1986), *work habits, disruptiveness, appurtenance and dress, days absent and basic skills* (Farkas et al, 1990), *cultural consumption* (Ganzeboom, De Gaaf and Robert, 1990), Children's as well as parental culture capital activities including *reading, watching TV, vocabulary test score, type of music, concert, play, newspaper and cultural involvement* (Sullivan, 2001). Since Bourdieu, the properties of social and culture capital have been shifting over time as scholars interpret capitals using different parameters. Eventually, new forms of capitals have been introduced, e.g. 'Personal Capital' (Brown and Hesketh, 2004), 'Motility capital' (Kaufmann, Bergman and Joye, 2004), 'Emotional capital' (Reay, 2004:60), 'Network capital' (Urry, 2011 and 2012b). In addition, emerging sites of cultural production and accumulation are being associated with, *the use of the internet and social networking sites, playing sports, watching sports, spending time with friends, going to the gym, gigs and preference to rap and rock* (Savage et al., 2013:9). Social and economic capitals are adopted in the social research than culture capital due to their easy recognition and tangible exchange. Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1990) associated social capital primarily as a property of relationships and connection within and between families. Instead, Putnam, (1995) defines social capital as about wider communities and nation state, involving public engagement, democratic participation, and trust relationships. Social capital has also been investigated to explore how social-cultural inclusion is achieved in study destinations.

In light of above evidence, this study takes a slightly different approach to interpreting participants' cultural, economic and social possessions, in a numeric sense, to symbolise the comparative position taking of each participant, within trajectories. The study considers the participants' lifestyle preferences, social-cultural participation, ongoing experiences, and their future intentions, to assign a numeric value (1-4) to each form of capital subjectively. I went through the qualitative interviews to assess participants' previous achievements, family and cultural background, their purpose in attending British university, personal abilities, and competence, previous and current resources and access to support, social-cultural participation in and out of university, and intentions for future mobility paths. The operationalisation of this is presented in Figure-9; this represents an operational model to explain the procedure through which the real trajectories of study participants are developed.

Figure 9-DETERMINING TRAJECTORIES: CAPITALS, ACCUMULATION, AND THEIR CONVERSION

Capital accumulation across time and space





In a systematic assessment, I first looked at qualitative interviews to evaluate the level and quality of forms of capitals in individual cases. After assigning values (1-4) to each of the capitals, I examined the ongoing experiences of participants more broadly to see whether they are thriving or failing in British education. I then filtered information by correlating these measured values of capitals and current experiences in the UK with participants' intentions of future mobilities and use of educational products, including foreign contacts at university, paid or volunteer work experiences and the 'British degree' as an end product of study abroad. Having checked through experiences in and out of British university, I integrate the level of pre-existing capitals and their ongoing conversion/translation into other forms, with students' future mobility intentions and perceptions towards achievements, and their use, to illustrate the overall trajectory of a participant.

#### 4.4- THE TRAJECTORIES IN PRACTICE: THE IDEAL-REAL NEXUS

This section is an empirical extension of the theoretical types of trajectories explained in the previous section. Using the qualitative insight of the personal narratives of participants, this discussion provides evidence and the rationale behind the actual trajectories of participants that exist in the study cohort. It starts by linking the real experiences of participants with the proposed 'ideal types' in Figure 8, to suggest a strategic capital accumulation process taking place among the study cohort, helping them becoming mobile on distinct trajectories.

##### THE IDEAL-REAL NEXUS OF TRAJECTORIES:

Before explaining the real trajectories of participants taking shape through British education, it is worth linking the ideal typology of trajectories (Figure-8) with their representative, real ones (Figures 10-13). Primarily, the ideal construct of a trajectory (Figure-8) serves as a basic structure to illustrate the real life trajectories of participants and underpin the implied heterogeneity in the study cohort, based on their social-cultural possessions and personal biographies that build over time. The real trajectory adapts the rationale of associated capitals with ongoing experiences from ideal trajectories, which are grounded in the theoretical insights of Bourdieu. The correlation

of real trajectories with the ideal helps us rationalise personal attitudes, strategies, and motivations on the course of their international education. If someone, for example, is seeking paid work rather than devoting entire focus on study, why is that so?

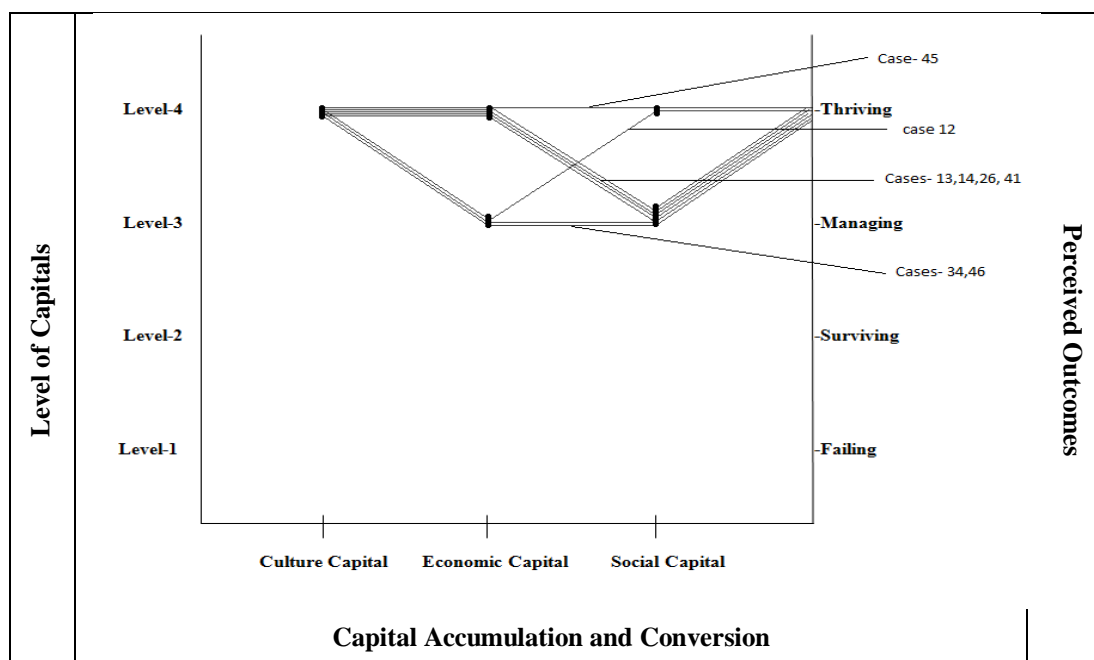
The idealised theoretical model presented in Figure 8 provides the basis to make sense of these experiences by recognising their strategic accumulation of capitals to produce class advantages. The conceptual function of forms of capital serves as a building block for real trajectories as they help rationalise personal attitudes and perceptions towards opportunities and barriers emergent in their academic journey. Also, the ideal trajectory provides guidance upon which to classify and distinguish participants for the purpose of analysis. In doing so, the real trajectories draw on the regulatory principals and properties of capitals (proposed in Figure 8) to rationalise the ways in which individual participants progress in British education, e.g. how students, in an alien education setting, react to challenges of adaptation by developing strategies to invest one form of capital in order to produce or empower other forms, thereby enabling him or her to succeed in international education.

Evidence suggests participants did not have similar opportunities to deploy capitals strategically to produce advantages, mainly due to the added complexities of deploying and accumulating capitals in a foreign context in which the situation of overseas students could be symbolised as ‘fish out of water’. Consequently, the mode of producing advantages in and through international education will be distinct and involve the role of ethnicity, nationality, and social-economic pressure that students and their family face. In this vein, the variations in amount and quality of capitals observed in real trajectories have extended Bourdieu’s theoretical stand (see next Section). As evidence suggests, biographical and personal socio-cultural context play a greater role than social class location. On an individual level, differences are more significant than Bourdieu might have thought in the French context. It intensifies further when considering ethnic differences in a cross culture setting, in international education. In this vein, the ideal-real nexus of trajectories symbolises a circular knowledge processing in which the ideal trajectory serves as an operational structure to examine participants’ personal experiences and biographical narratives, to feed into our existing knowledge of the working and operating of forms of capital proposed by Bourdieu some years ago.

#### 4.4.1- THE HIGHFLYER

Highflyers are the ‘best and brightest’ of the cohort examined in this study. A total of 8 out of 51 students have been identified as Highflyers among whom, three were from Pakistan (Case studies- 41; 45; 46), three were from India (Case studies-14; 26; 34) and two were from Bhutan (Case studies-12; 13). The trajectory illustrating Highflyers’ path is presented in Figure 10. All of the Highflyers had an excellent education back home, and most of them had had international education prior coming to the UK. Bhutanese highflyers (Case studies 12; 13) for example, had been to India for their schooling and tertiary education while Indian Highflyers (Case study 26; 34) and one Pakistani Highflyer (Case study 46) were born and raised in a privileged environment and acquired their first qualification abroad before coming to the UK. Thus, academic preparedness became their strength throughout their childhood. Finance has never been a concern for them, nor was it, in the UK.

Figure 10-THE HIGHFLYER



Source-Qualitative interviews

Several of them were able, even, to secure funding for their study in the UK due to their prior academic achievements. Apparently, these students exhibited confidence, knowledge, and elite tastes to progress seamlessly, in academia. Some highfliers were ambitious enough to either establish their own business (Indian Highflyer- 14) or bring innovation to their respective industries back home (Pakistani Highflyers- 41; 45; 46). Respondents in this category were reluctant to privilege international jobs over

opportunities available at home. This could be due to unrestricted access to resources and support available at home and a sense of control, which they might be unlikely to have when working abroad. Considering the role of capitals in making such a trajectory, culture and economic capitals were dominant compared to social capital, as displayed in Figure 10. Qualitative evidence from the study suggests a crucial role of pre-existing culture capital and the strong support of economic capital in making the students' transition through British education successful. Social capital, however, was not directly required to progress in the classroom, but was, instead, produced through active participation in university life, clubs, and societies for healthy social well-being. This is simply an investment in culture and economic capital to achieve inclusion in the vibrant university life in the UK, and it was these forms of capital that contributed most significantly to their trajectories going forward.

#### 4.4.1.1- REPRESENTATIVE CASE STUDY:

Reshma Khan<sup>8</sup> (Pakistani Highflyer-41) has been studying for masters in international planning and sustainable development at a post-1992 university in London. She is a passionate, optimistic, and confident person with an excellent command of English language skills. She is from a well-educated family in which her father is an engineer running his own business, and her siblings are achieving well, academically. She has been a high achiever and talented student since childhood and has had the best available, elite schooling in affiliation with the University of Cambridge, in Pakistan. She was awarded a '*Mehdi Ali Mirza Award - 2009 for High Achievers*' (2009) and '*Campus Gold Medal for Academic Excellence*' (2010) at the undergraduate level. Her interest in urban planning and sustainability led her to think about studying abroad due to the lack of elite higher education in the field, in Pakistan. She was further influenced by the funding opportunity for her masters, offered by a British university in central London. Reshma decided not to engage in paid work and determined to make the best use of opportunities available at the London-based, renowned university. She enjoys privileged access to a multicultural academic environment and opportunities for developing a competitive edge. She recently married a British graduate in mechanical engineering, working in Pakistan, and will join him after completing her current course in the UK. She prefers to return to Pakistan and has already been able to secure a well-paid job there, in her field of expertise. In the coming future, Reshma is willing to move

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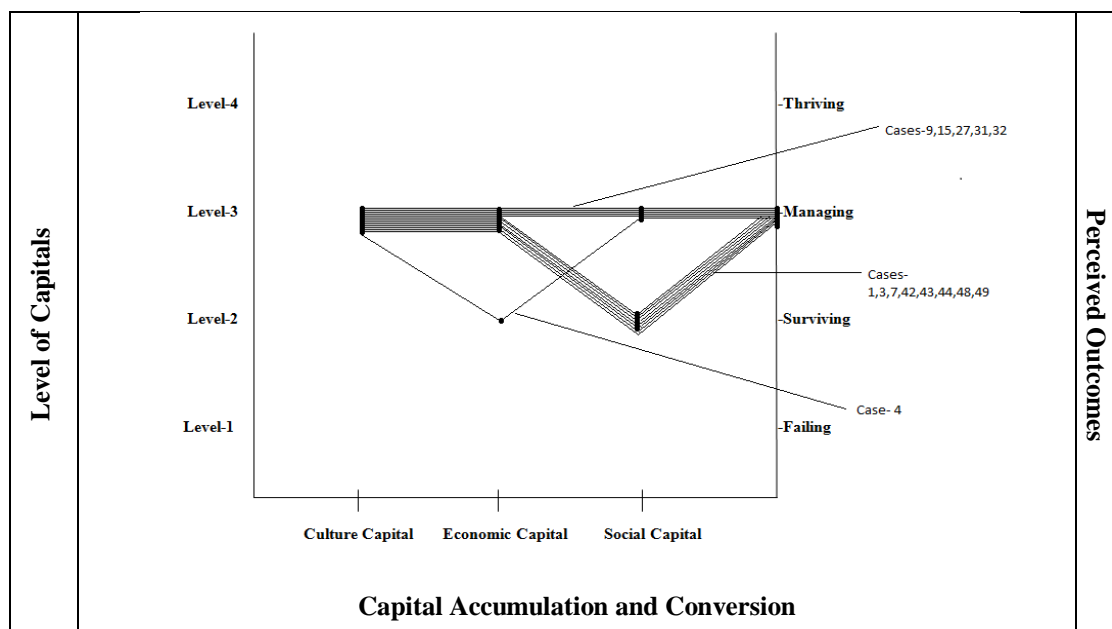
<sup>8</sup> Anonymised name

locally or globally according to her career progression. She is representative of a Highflyer trajectory that suggests a significant level of satisfaction and academic attainment throughout her journey abroad, and probably into the future too. Such experiences and achievements are widely desired but rarely experienced and in this way, are easily distinguishable from other students' experiences. Certainly, not all international students have such a positive story.

#### 4.4.2- THE REALIST

The Realist is associated, in the study, with having a genuine and legitimate purpose for attending a British university. The realists in this study largely came from a middle-class background and strategically produced positional advantages through international education through which they are determined to achieve distinction, primarily by accumulating culture capital. The study has identified 14 respondents who best fit the criteria for being a realist. In terms of nationality, they come from Afghanistan (Case study- 01), Bangladesh (Case studies- 03; 04; 07; 09), India (Case studies-15; 27; 31; 32), Pakistan (Case studies- 42; 43; 44; 48) and Sri Lanka (Case study-49). Figure 11 illustrates the realist trajectory.

Figure 11-THE REALIST



Source- Interview data

The majority of Realist participants come from a middle-class background with competence in academic skills and recognisable achievements. Parental education and financial support were also favourable to their smooth transition to international

education. Many had been through private or state, elite education back home, and a few travelled to neighbour countries for higher studies (Cases- 01, 03, 43). The family based culture and economic capital seem to dominate the process, creating the trajectories of participants coming under Realist group. These participants were having a smooth transition through the British education and showed personal abilities and aptitude to adapt and adjust quickly to the international educational standard. The majority of participants in this category did not express great difficulties in making progress but expressed higher expectations from their education, to gain a competitive edge in labour market back home. Realist participants were financially secure, however, they wished to achieve work experiences in their desired field that is valued by employers and would help to gain positional advantages in the labour market back home. Normally, Realists were found to possess adequate levels (3) of culture, and economic capital and social capital played a supportive role in making trajectories smooth and steady. The desire to accumulate culture and economic capitals was witnessed in the majority of cases, rather than social capital. One Bangladeshi (Case - 04) was an exception to this trend. Despite possessing a relatively low level of culture capital, due to the ordinary background, limited funds to support studying and living in the UK, this Bangladeshi participant harvested advantages by generating social capital on campus. He became an active member of the student union at his university, which empowered his social capital leading him to be placed in the Realist category.

#### 4.4.2.1- REPRESENTATIVE CASE STUDY:

Minakshi<sup>9</sup> (Case study 49) is from an upper middle-class family in Sri Lanka, in which education has been a matter of passion. The culture of mobility in her family led many of her family members to obtain a British education long ago. Following the family trend, she was pursuing an undergraduate course in microbiology, with a clear intention to do a PhD at a British university in future. Minakshi had had privately funded schooling, provided by the University of Cambridge in Sri Lanka. She was inspired to go abroad as part of a family strategy to escape huge competition for entry into local state universities and due to a lack of private universities in Sri Lanka offering study in microbiology. She had been an advanced student throughout her schooling in Sri Lanka, achieving consistently high scores and grades. In this way, her level of cultural capital

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<sup>9</sup> Anonymised name

could be perceived as being adequate to meet the international British standard, which allowed her to adopt a western education and advance her academic journey.

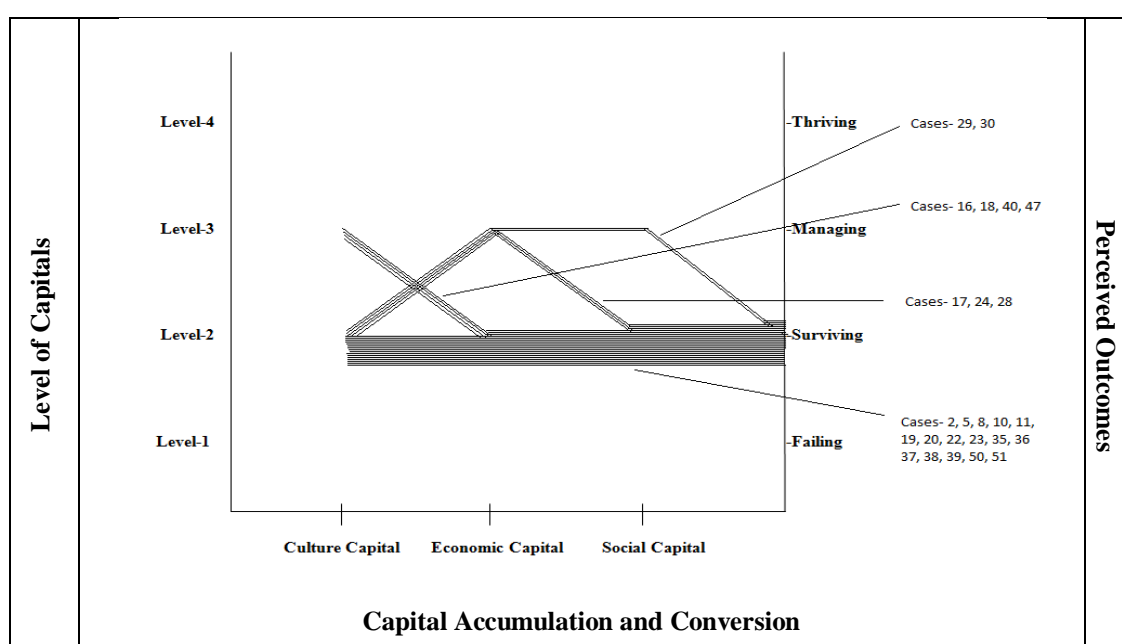
Financially, Minakshi is established and family funded. She did not secure any funding or scholarship for her British education. Neither is Minakshi interested in taking on paid employment, as she wants to devote most of her time to achieving academic excellence, which, in her opinion, is her sole motive for coming to the UK. British education for her is highly rewarding, and the experiences of studying in London are worth accumulating. Socially, Minakshi has been limited to the network of her classmates. She intentionally saves her time for studying by not going out socially. Noticeably, a limited level of social capital did not affect her experiences or aspirations. Instead, her honest acceptance of family support and the life-changing potential of British education has led her to realise the opportunities and challenges that come with international education. Paid employment and restricted work rights because of new policies have never concerned her, and she has focused herself on academic excellence, believing that it may provide her with the best chance of gaining a competitive advantage in the Sri Lankan labour market. Minakshi is illustrative of a Realist student who is highly motivated, hardworking, focused, and academically talented. Her selective attitude emerges from a realisation of the true purpose of education and the rewards that such an education can return; these have been central motivating factors, which have helped Minakshi to manage her studies very well. Despite the family support from which she benefits, most of her achievements are the result of her efforts and her ambitions. She has managed her expectations of what a British university can offer as well as managing her resources to maximise the potential positive outcomes, beyond her employability to benefit wider society.

#### 4.4.3- THE CREDENTIALIST

The 'Credentialist' consists of the largest segment of the study cohort, representing 25/51 participants, which is nearly 50% of the total number of interviewees. The majority of Credentialist were from families of lower middle-class segments, distributed unevenly across South Asian countries, with the majority coming from India. Country-wise distribution reveals that Credentialist come from Afghanistan (Case- 02), Bangladesh (Cases 05; 08; 10; 11), India (Case studies-16, 17; 18; 19; 20; 22; 23; 24;

28; 29; 30; 35; 36; 37; 38; 39), Nepal (Case- 40), Pakistan (Case- 47) and Sri Lanka (Cases- 50; 51). The trajectories of these participants are presented in Figure 12. The participants with Credentialist tendencies possess a complex set of resources and capitals, largely at an average level and mostly, which were undifferentiated or common. The Credentialists in this study perceive the benefits of a British education, particularly the degree as a final product in its material sense, to be the main reward. Once complete, a 'British degree' will enable them to benefit from positional advantages to outweigh local graduates in the fierce competition for employment back home.

Figure 12-THE CREDENTIALIST



Source- Interview data

As explained in Figure 12, many participants showed an average level (2) in all three forms of capital. However some students- particularly Indians- have demonstrated higher levels of economic or social capital than others but, due to poor academic achievements and a narrow vision of the real advantages of international education, have been placed into the Credentialist category. Evidence suggests that, for many of those who were getting financial and other supports from family, the decision to study abroad is often inspired by family interests rather than being based on the student's initiative. The students, themselves, lack the intellectual drive required to achieve success at a British university.



#### 4.4.3.1- REPRESENTATIVE CASE STUDY:

Iqbal Husain<sup>10</sup> (Case-05) is from a middle-class family of four in Bangladesh. His family is well educated, and his father works in Saudi Arabia. He had access to private schooling in Bangladesh, where he developed an interest in legal studies to pursue as his career. He had a dream of becoming a law expert, which is a highly reputed profession in Bengali society. For him, possession of a law degree, particularly a British degree is highly rewarding and treated as valuable currency among legal professionals in Bangladesh. The British qualification is seen as a 'passport' to Bangladeshi legal societies and professional bodies, which recognise a British law qualification as being of higher value and worth.

His attitude towards achieving a degree from British universities, to gain a competitive edge over local graduates is apparently common among the majority of Credentialist participants. On this basis, he chose to undertake a distance-learning course in law, which was partially sponsored by the University of London. Despite his efforts, the lack of real exposure to a British academic environment led him to consider moving to London to continue his education. Despite his stable financial conditions, he decided to undertake paid work during his education to supplement his living; as a result, he was working at a superstore in London. His and his family's expectations from a British education are greater than their satisfaction with the experiences he was actually having at his university. He reported many complaints regarding the university's services and the quality of education, but he still hopes to produce advantages from his course. Socially, Iqbal has been exploring his network and social connections, which has been limited to ethnic and native friends and colleagues at the University and beyond. Iqbal experienced culture shock when he first moved to the UK but has since adjusted well to the UK system. He is planning to go for a higher degree in law, called 'Bar at law,' in the UK after completing his current undergraduate degree. He expressed disagreement and problems with the ongoing student visa reforms, which may disrupt his transition to both future studies and work experiences after graduation.

The perception of the role of a British degree in securing advantages is noticeable in other Credentialist cases. However, the intensity of commitment to achieve a degree, with or without other experiences, varies among participants. Compared to other

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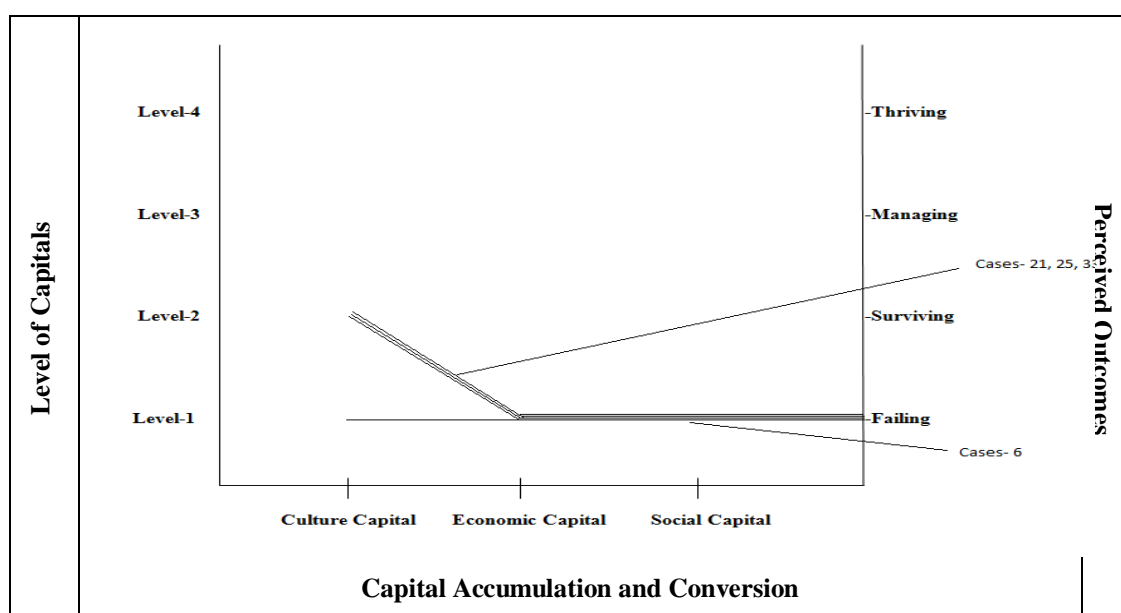
<sup>10</sup> Anonymised name

Bangladeshi participants, who share similar views those of Iqbal, participants from Pakistan and India do not feel the same way. For many, degrees could be part of the outcomes but work experiences also add extra value to the employability of the student's degree. Therefore term-time work experiences alongside education are a general practice among these participants. Unlike Highfliers and Realists, the limited view of the Credentialist undermines the actual and potential opportunities to produce advantages in a vibrant university environment and the cultural sphere beyond the academy. This mindset is indicative of public perceptions, in source countries, towards British higher education, which would attract many students who may not possess the right amount of capital, but are still able to arrange resources to get into a British university.

#### 4.4.4- THE STRUGGLER

A very small number of participants had a very difficult transition through British education and were struggling to progress, adjust, and adapt to a western style education. Only four participants experienced this extremely difficult situation in which academic progress and living in the UK became full of challenges due mainly, to lack of culture and economic capital resources. The struggling participants came from Bangladesh (Case - 06) and India (Cases- 21; 25; 33). The trajectory they were following is presented in Figure 13.

Figure 13-THE STRUGGLER



Source- Interview data

The Figure shows the very poor level and quality of capitals the strugglers possessed while attending British education. The Indian participants showed an acceptable level of academic skills and were from lower middle-class backgrounds, yet their problematic access to resources, especially financial, led them either to become heavily engaged in paid work or to limit their participation in the university culture leading to exclusion. This inevitably had a negative effect on their academic achievement. As culture and economic capital were limited during their transition, social capital did not appear to rescue them as these participants sought to trade off University experiences against paid work and actively excluded themselves from university life. In light of this, the everyday struggle to survive, both in and out of University, overshadowed their hope of producing advantages and securing successful outcomes from their education in the UK. Their experiences were mainly a result of a lack of resources, especially financial, accompanied by a lack of linguistic, and a shortfall in academic skills. This group lacked both financial and emotional family support. One important thing to notice is that this group's belief in the power of British education to bring about a change in their lives was high amongst them all. It seems this constituted their main motivation to continue studying at a British university. Despite their satisfaction at university, their progress in international education is doubtful. This is evident in the example of an Indian participant (Case study -25) with a good academic background and communication skills. He was heavily engaged in paid employment that proved detrimental to his academic studies, and as a result, he failed his examination before this study was concluded. He went back to India with nothing but the burden of his failure and the shame of wasting his opportunities for little financial or other benefit. His case represents personal neglect and carelessness towards the considerable demands of academic study in the UK. This was rarely the case with other participants.

#### 4.4.4.1- REPRESENTATIVE CASE STUDY:

Sridhar<sup>11</sup> (Case - 21) is from a lower middle-class Indian family and is studying internet security in London. His academic background was not promising and low-income family resources led him to struggle with the low quality of academic skills and competence. His family financial conditions are not so favourable and, as a result, he is entirely dependent on his paid work to survive in the UK. Moreover, his family frequently expect him to support and maintain them. In doing so, he has been working

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<sup>11</sup> Anonymised name

in the UK since his arrival in 2009. Regarding family expectations, he is the only son in the family and represents the family's main source of income in the future. In the wave of the culture of migration in Kerala, he decided to go abroad and somehow managed to obtain a visa to study in the UK after failing to secure a study place in Australia. In paid work, he undertook many roles, including domestic worker and cleaner, and has been working around 30-40 hours per week during the vacation to meet his own cost of living and fund his studies, as well as supporting his family back in India. His motivations behind study abroad were not clear, but parental choice and community pressures appear to be the main reasons behind his decisions. He started working before he had a chance to get used to British society and culture. Securing a source of income was vital; without it, he could not continue to live and study in the UK. He has had little opportunity to experience anything beyond his work and academic routines. Nor did he have a chance to escape the difficult transition period for which he was not prepared, before leaving India. Sridhar presents us with a critical example of 'the Struggler' who lacks one or more forms of capital in many combinations. Sridhar's weak cultural capital does not affect him as much as his financial instability which demands more attention if he is to continue with his studies. His existing way of life makes it difficult for him to learn the many lessons of practical life in the UK, and he is far from achieving worthwhile outputs from his problematic study at a British University. There are very few examples of the Struggler type, but it is clearly visible in the study cohort. After examining the actual trajectories made by a particular set of participants, it becomes clear that there are recognisable variations between trajectories proposed by the ideal framework (Figure 8) and those actually being created by participants with different stocks and a combination of the capitals. The difference continues among participants within and between trajectories and requires explanation. A brief discussion, to identify and explain such difference is given below.

#### 4.5- DYNAMIC PATHWAYS: AN INTERPRETATION OF TRAJECTORIES

Having looked through real trajectories, a significant level of variations is seen in the participants' experiences because of diversity in the possession of capitals and their very personal strategic use to produce advantages, with a clear aim of achieving social class distinction through either, employment, business, or migration. A further added complexity is the evidence in the study, which challenges the view that 'homogeneity'

is a basic property of the international student body. Instead, it has emerged that the experiences of study participants at the level of the individual (may or may not be the same as someone sharing similar path) are at the heart of making these distinct trajectories leading to the unequal outcomes of their education abroad, found in the study. To acknowledge these variations, a brief overview of trajectories revealing the underlying (and resulting) inequality is given below.

#### 4.5.1- INDIVIDUAL JOURNEYS AND UNEQUAL OUTCOMES

The research has revealed that studying abroad has become a part of life for many participants and is not an isolated event in itself but is linked to a lifelong purpose of gaining advantages or seeking a better future, for not only themselves but their family too. The majority of participants commonly expressed this motivation, yet some are more reliant on positive outcomes than others are. As a general trend, Highflyers are less reliant on the outcomes of their studies in the UK compared to those who have problematic access to resources or support, particularly Strugglers. In contrast, the level of satisfaction regarding studying and living in the UK was found to be higher amongst Strugglers than Realists or Highflyers. This unique insight into the relationship between satisfaction and experiences among the study cohort is discussed in chapter 7, but it is important to recognise here that sampled students are individuals who seek advantages from their perspective, which has long been a part of their life project. A Bangladeshi Struggler (06) for example, chose to go to Britain, not to make money, but to bring social recognition to himself and his family. Despite exhausting employment, stressful social living conditions, and a lack of support, he believes that when he becomes a British graduate, the way in which society and his community will perceive him will be transformed. He is a genuine student with a trust in education but lacks resources, resulting in hardship in making progress at the university. In contrast, an Indian Highflyer (14) - an engineer from Mumbai who belongs to a super rich family dealing with gold and diamond jewellery – pursued a British degree to save a year; the equivalent qualification in India would have taken two years to complete. She requires a degree to start her own business in India as soon as possible. Case studies 06 and 14 differ significantly, but both have a clear purpose of bringing change through gaining a British qualification. However, based on their relative resources, skills and levels of capital, they are heading towards entirely different destinations. Despite the common trajectories that students develop collectively, each one is on an individual journey,

drawing on their unique mix of different forms of capital, making their efforts to maximise their rewards, and utilising their different approaches to accumulate capital. Each participant is undertaking their studies in the same British education system, but how their respective experiences play out corresponds to their particular narrative emerging from their studies in the UK.

The experiences of the study cohort are also very personal properties, therefore, given the level and amount of capital that they possess, student experiences differ more or less according to their embodied and personal attributes. Life in London for Highflyers, for example, could be a matter of their emerging cosmopolitan identities and consumption experiences in the global city, while for Strugglers it is full of challenges and overcoming those challenges has, in itself, become a part of their existence in the city. For Realists, the value of living in London is related to the employability benefits it offers, in particular, 'soft credentials' skills gain, which provides a competitive edge, while for Credentialists it is just a process of generating western credentials, enough, to gain access to the labour market (Miller, 2010). More often, the image of life in the UK is defined by the kind of experiences that students may have. Therefore, the interpretation of these experiences requires an understanding of the student as a person independently, rather than as part of a homogeneous group. However, an individualistic interpretation of the reported experiences does not preclude a collective identity; rather it provides a further extension to the view through which that individual case might properly be assessed. The collective experiences are largely associated with a particular group of students, who are historically grounded in ethnic identities, race, beliefs, nationality, linguistic roots, and the cultural context of a student body. The experiences of students with Chinese, Indian, or African origins could be taken as an example to support this view.

This study considers a trajectory representing collective experiences of a particular type of participants facing similar challenges and deploying relatively similar strategies to succeed in British education. In this way, a trajectory is considered separate from other type of trajectories that are being developed by participants through a different set of capitals. In this regard, the differences inherited by participants in their social-biographical profile before attending international education and inequalities in educational attainments in the UK tend to exacerbate differences between participants. Sharing similar cultural roots and identities (South Asian), most of the students had a particular dream, which they perceive British education would give them the

opportunity to realise. Students imagine that during their distinct journeys they will make discoveries about themselves and create new identities using British education. In doing so, Highflyers are often preparing to embark on careers as top-level professionals or want to establish their own corporate identities, while Realists are keen to develop skill sets that can give them a competitive edge in the positional competition for decent employment. The Credentialist has something more practical and easy to achieve, a qualification or degree. Lastly, the Strugglers are aiming to continue with education until they can use it to their advantages or until other options become available. These findings contrast with and challenge the assumptions and preoccupations of previous studies, which treat international students as a homogeneous group experiencing the educational process in the same way. Instead, the proposed idea is to respect and recognise the differences within the international student body, which produce diverse pathways leading to unequal outcomes.

#### 4.5.2- CAPITAL ACCUMULATION, CONVERSION AND STUDENTS' TRAJECTORIES

Evidence suggests that when international students move from one culture to another, they have trouble in managing their skills and performance according to the expectations of the academic institution. Students have many options available to make the most of the range of experiences while studying abroad, but for a variety of reasons, these are not equally accessible to all. For instance, many students are simply not capable of achieving the levels of success that their international peers are capable of. In addition, changing location means leaving one educational setting and moving to an alternative that is unfamiliar and might have a detrimental effect on an individual's skill set. This kind of cross-border mobility might bring benefits such as opportunities to extend the forms of social capital that students possess, broadening their cultural capital, and adding linguistic or cultural values into their existing set of skills, but for many students, as shown in previous studies, changing place could have devastating consequences (Waters, 2012a; Leung and Waters, 2013; Wiers-Jenssen, 2008; Wiers-Jenssen and Try, 2005). This investigation found that the study abroad experience, in varying degrees, improves individuals' attitudes, perceptions and mental-cognitive abilities to deal with challenges in different time-space locations and helps students accumulate the most desirable capital using other forms of capital they already possess.

For example, a Bangladeshi Realist (04) used multi-directional strategies to overcome the gap between his cultural and economic forms of capital. By working in Sainsbury's to supplement his living expenses and by building a social network through his active role in his student union, he gained an edge over others in the classroom. By contrast, an Indian Credentialist (Case 18) who had an excellent academic record in India has been looking for an employment in order to settle in Britain, which required him to obtain a British degree because his Indian credentials were misrecognised in the British labour market. In response, he decided to do MBA to accumulate culture capital. In contrast to many examples of using paid work to compensate for a deficit in cultural and social capital by Credentialists and Strugglers, this study provides evidence of students producing financial resources based on their nationally located cultural capital. Pakistani and Indian Highflyers (41 and 14 respectively) and Bangladeshi Realists (07 and 09) were awarded fully funded scholarships from their British universities who recognised their academic excellence and achievements in their home countries. The conversion of cultural and economic forms of capital is evident in the narratives of participants; however, social capital has not been used to advance cultural or economic capital but has played a significant role in helping students to gain temporary paid work. Evidence from this study suggests that the accumulation of many forms of capital occurred through exchanges and conversions between different forms of capital held, to balance the right amount of capital required for a smooth transition at a British university. Highflyers are exceptions, but Realists, Credentialist, and Strugglers have been actively taking part in those conversions, regardless of the outcomes.

#### 4.6- CONCLUSION

Student migrants from Asia and South Asia have long been perceived in the literature as a homogeneous ethnic group (Chadee and Naidoo, 2009; Chan, 2012; Collins, 2006; Doherty and Singh, 2005; Kell and Vogl, 2010). This serious neglect in acknowledging the diversity of the multiethnic Asian population is not only methodologically misleading but reminds us that such stereotypes continue to treat student migrants from these nations as the same, facing the same challenges and experiences alike (Lee, 2006; Huang, 2007; Jackson and Heggins, 2003; Wong, 2004). Fearon (2003) has argued, "*Ethnic group is a slippery concept*" and that homogeneity of a population coming from a vast geographical area (South Asia) could be an illusion in the light of the diversity of



cultures and subcultures within it (Fearon, 2003). This unifying perception often ignores the range of ethnic, national, and societal differences within the group that are at play in reinforcing pre-existing inequalities in educational attainments in study abroad and beyond. There is a pressing need to acknowledge that differences exist in a migrant community- in the wake of personal storytelling or biographical accounts of student migrants- to better understand their personal experiences and their distinct migrant journeys. In this context, the differences between and within society and culture discussed in the chapter outshine the so-called homogeneity in South Asian countries as they differ in size, economic strength, vision, and global presence, making it even harder to compare one with another. They carry relatively distinct socio-cultural schemes, exacerbated by colonial legacies that have left countries with irreversible social and political divisions (Boss and Jalal, 2004; Ghani, 2012; Jalal, 1995). The variations among these nations, particularly, in ethnic and social dynamics, political ideologies and governing systems, uneven distribution of wealth and power, social-economic inequalities, ethnic and identity politics are so significant that it makes them unique and thus far from being homogeneous. In this vein, education in South Asia has been presented in the literature as an area of systemic failure and political misuse (e.g. Sri Lanka), a source of economic growth, a means to privilege and social domination (e.g. India), linked to poverty, radicalisation and cultural resistance to modernization (e.g. Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh), and a vehicle to escape economic and geographical hardship (e.g. Nepal, Bhutan). Given this diversity, globalisation, neoliberal ideology, and free market forces further intensify the social and cultural tensions that South Asian communities have been facing over a long period. As a result, educational migration, particular student migration, is on the rise and South Asia has become a major source region for students seeking academic excellence, soft skills', and mobile experiences through study abroad.

In light of the literature suggesting heterogeneity of South Asian international students, the chapter then goes on to materialise the reality of student experiences in the form of a distinct typology and set of trajectories to explain the social biographical differences that international students from South Asian seem to carry during their education in the UK. As a result, examining experiences and concluding research without highlighting such differences would be misleading. Therefore, the construction of an Idealised 'Typology' as a theoretical model has been devised, based on the defining categories of; *Highflier*, *Realist*, *Credentialist*, and *Struggler*. The individual biographies have been

conceptualised as trajectories symbolising the relative experiences and achievements of study participants in the UK and framed as; *Thriving, Managing, Surviving* and *Failing* which are later placed against the idealised ‘*Typology*’ to signify social class and biographical distinction on an individual level. The rationale behind developing an idealised theoretical model has been to exhibit social class and biographical differences that separate individual participants from each other and reflect the role of different levels and types of capitals possessed by them to facilitate a process of producing unequal outcomes that leads us to specify participants of this study as Highflier, Realist, Credentialist, and Strugglers. This is explained in Figures- 10,11,12,13 respectively.

The personal experiences expressed in interviews were key to determining the individuals’ stock of capitals that governed the creation of their trajectories. When the actual experiences of particular participants were examined against the ideal typology created, as explained in Figure 9, participants appear to fit in one of the four types developed in the chapter. However, these types were not exactly the same as real case studies. There were variations in personal biographical accounts that seem to create a difference between ideal and real trajectories, which can be seen in Figures 10-13. Nonetheless, the idealised theoretical model of typology has been developed to represent types of students, using their social class characteristics and personal biographies and was never meant to be an exact match with all individual case studies, but rather, to fit with the typology to reflect on their distinctiveness and differences in style of capital accumulation. In a significant finding, the representation of types of participants based on their nationality has been found disproportionate to the number of students coming from that particular South Asian nation. This is quite clear by looking at trajectories as explained in Figures 10-13. Study participants from India, for example, contributed most interviews to the study and their academic well preparedness and inclination towards international education could be assumed by referring to the literature explained in section-1.4.1 in chapter 1 and section- 4.2 in this chapter. Despite this, the majority of Indian participants of this study fall into the ‘the Credentialist’ (16/26) category while only a few could be recognised as ‘Highfliers’ (03/26), compared to participants coming from other nations in South Asia. This is shown in Table-4 below.

Table 4-THE PROPORTION OF PARTICIPANTS IN TYPOLOGY BY NATIONALITY

PARTICIPANT TYPES	INDIA	PAKISTAN	BANGLADESH	SRILANKA	BHUTAN	NEPAL	MALDIVES	AFGHANISTAN
HIGHFLIERS (8)	3	3	-	-	2	-	-	-
REALIST (14)	4	4	4	1	-	1	-	1
CREDENTIAL-IST (25)	16	1	4	2	-	-	-	1
STRUGGLER (4)	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL (51)	26	8	9	3	2	1	0	-

Source: Interviews (see appendix-E)

Surprisingly, there are many *Credentialists* (25) and *Realists* (14) followed by a smaller number of *Highfliers* (08) and even fewer *Strugglers* (04) in the entire study cohort. This finding should be viewed in light of the literature discussed earlier. Despite the limited amount of evidence available in the literature, we have seen in chapter 1 (Section-1.4.1) that India has a reputation of hosting international students from neighbouring nations (Dongaonkar and Negi, 2009; Government of India and UNESCO, 2014) indicating the attraction of a good academic structure in education and a growing economy. Altbach recognises the Indian HE system as ‘*islands of excellence in a sea of mediocrity*’ (Altbach, 2014) in which national elite institutes e.g. IIM, IIT and AIIMS and central universities have a big proportion of students from the dominant social classes (Deshpandey, 2006). The quality of education available at home, despite tough competition to access it, may have influenced the choices of the privileged in India. In addition, the US and Australia have been receiving a significant number of students from India and other countries in South Asia suggesting, therefore, that the privileged could also head to other destinations or British universities other than post-1992. We cannot compare these due to lack of data. Post-1992 Universities in the UK could be less favourable than globally renowned western elite HEIs or state run national elite HEIs in the countries of South Asia.

This trend could be extended to other parts of South Asia in suggesting that Highflier type students with privileged backgrounds do not necessarily leave South Asia but are advantaged by their social class membership in gaining access to national elite HEIs rather than pursuing relatively newly emerged universities in the UK (e.g. Post-1992). This might explain why Highfliers in the typology are fewer in number relative to the other types of participants. In connection with this finding, though access to elite national HEIs also suggests that there could be a ‘*second chance*’ effect, as explained by

Brooks and Waters (2009b), where international education is strategically approached to overcome failure in local HEIs and thus contributes to the large proportion of Credentialist types in the study cohort. The case studies (10, 24, 32, 33, 36, 37, 43, and 49) are exemplary in this regard (See appendix -F). Credentialist type students normally perceived the benefits of international credentials (British degrees) as the opportunity to gain positional advantages in the national labour market; this is quite similar to the findings presented by Waters (2008) and others (Sin, 2013b, Xue, 2008).

In a significant finding, the study suggests the emerging trend of ‘Step migration’ among regionally mobile students in South Asia. Following the literature, it has emerged that regional trends of student mobilities are shaped by the regional cooperation between countries and the rise of Asian universities (Altbach and Umakoshi, 2004) on global university ranking scales (Altbach, 2013). India, in particular, has been receiving students from neighbouring countries. Chapter 1 (Section-1.4.1) and this chapter (Section-4.2) explain the role of India in becoming a ‘stepping stone’ for students of small and/or South Asian countries with political-economic the inability to provide modern, if not quality, education to their citizens. India’s has aspirations to lead the region and thus is investing heavily in the national HE sector and inviting students from neighbouring nations with or without scholarships. As discussed earlier, India has open border relationships with Nepal and Bhutan, which again may have facilitated their students’ decision to study in India prior to travel to global destinations. Afghanistan, Bhutan and Nepal, as well as the Maldives are among problematic countries facing many political-economic challenges in sending their ‘best and brightest’ to the global leading destination, despite the economic contribution of such migration, in the form of remittances, which have been tremendously beneficial to national GDP (Bhattarai, 2011). Regional student mobility patterns have been in favour of India and almost all South Asian and other regional countries have begun to use educational opportunities created by India, except Pakistan (See Table-1). This is also because of the regional influences of these big economies in building relationships with their counterparts in south Asia and offering cost effective education close to home. From the students’ perspective, the disparities in their local society, the weak tertiary education sector, economic constraints on the nation state investing in education and the growing middle-class population seem to contribute to the patterns of step migration. However, due to a lack of data, we do not know yet the full picture but it is clear in the literature that student mobility patterns on the regional level are taken seriously by

governments in South Asia due to the pressure of the knowledge economy, which requires more skilled citizens for a country to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This chapter presents a perspective on the differences that define the nature of the South Asian International student body in the UK. Drawing on these differences, it has been suggested that, on an individual level, the study cohort is representative of people who approach capital accumulation in a strategic way and, in doing so, mobilise forms of capital for their own advantage. When comparing the experiences of participants, a distinct picture emerged which unpacks the diverse trajectories along which participants are progressing. My analysis of the data revealed four trajectories, each quite distinct from the other. This suggests that the South Asian international student body is representative of a mix of people with a combination of material resources and forms of cultural, economic, and social capital. The strategic use of these forms of capital and resources correlates with the individual circumstances that distinguish students from one another; therefore, it would be misleading to consider the entire study cohort as homogeneous. Instead, this finding enables us to see that South Asian students have very different needs. Some enjoyed privileges by participating in aesthetic culture and deploying an abundance of their pre-existing forms of capital to their own advantage, while many struggled to initiate capital accumulation in the first place, which resulted in unequal outcomes. Analysis of the data also revealed that studying abroad is not an isolated event, but is woven into the students' wider life aspirations (Findlay et al, 2012) and that the social class, family background and available capital of individual participants provides the foundation on which students could proceed to class based advantages.

#### 4.7- CONTRIBUTION

The theoretical contribution of this chapter has been to extend the scope of social reproduction theory by considering British education as a global field of capital accumulation in which international students deploy and mobilise forms of capital to achieve social class advantages. This approach reflects upon the exclusive role of international education in capital accumulation, similar to the findings presented by Carlson (2011 & 2013), Crivello (2011) and Balaz and Williams (2004) who have pointed out the transformative power of international education which functions in the

development of capital formation (Xue, 2008) and accumulation of new cultural codes, taste and traits that are valued in employment settings (Kim, 2011; Li, 2013). In doing so, the chapter supports Bourdieu (1986) who has been criticised over the difficulties in the operationalisation of his theory, particularly the forms of capital. By adopting Bourdieu's forms of capital, this study visualises different versions of capital accumulation taking place among the study cohort in which students with a variety of capital sets and biographies, mobilise and invest in capital accumulation at both university and work, which contributes to developing their own trajectory distinct from other participants. This operationalization of capital accumulation is unique and provides some explanation as to how international students achieve in study abroad. Similarly, to associate a social class with study abroad experiences, the chapter identifies and defines four types of international students- Highflier, Realist, Credentialist, and Struggler. Each type is defined by a different set of capitals based on their social class membership and personal biographies. The differences in individual capital sets that students have been carrying throughout their education in the UK are then projected as trajectories mirroring the biographies of participants. The typology of participants advances the previous attempts of Brown, Hesketh and Williams (2004) who identify ideal types- 'Players' and 'Purists' and that of Choudaha, Orosz and Chang (2012) who classify international students going to the US as 'Explorer', 'Highflier', 'Strivers', and 'Strugglers'. The trajectories and types identified empirically in this study make a contribution, similar to the findings of Choudaha, Orosz and Chang (2012), Shannon-Little (2012) and Richardson et.al. (2012), to understand the diversity in the international student population. The study distinguishes participants on an individual level to demonstrate their unequal educational attainments; some are thriving while others are struggling to survive. As operational tools, the typology and relative trajectories help us associate the social biographies of respondents with on going accumulation process in which participants invest, mobilise and (re) produce capitals that are highly recognised and valued in both competitions for employment and social mobility for self and families.

Based on the social biographical background of participants, the chapter presents evidence to reject the stereotyping of the international student body as homogeneous and discovers the true heterogeneity embedded in personal variations between students that must be acknowledged. The difference in national life and socio economic dynamics of society, between South Asian nations, tends to create such diversity in

South Asia. In particular, the political economy of a nation which locally produces disadvantages in the form of ethnic violence (e.g. Afghanistan and Pakistan), unemployment, political use of education to marginalise specific ethnic minority groups (e.g. Sri Lanka), social cultural constraints over modernisation of education (e.g. Pakistan and Bangladesh) and governments' inability to provide better education must have played a role in shaping middle-class choices in favour of international education. In addition, the difficult geography of the specific nations (e.g. Nepal or Bhutan) limit the possibility of building a national educational space that can help accommodate the demand of the growing knowledge economy of that nation. By revealing such diversity and the heterogeneity of the South Asian student body in the UK, the chapter challenges the paradoxical view that undermines such variations and typecast students' experiences as homogeneous.

Within this heterogeneity discourse, the chapter contributes empirically by presenting and rationalising India's role as a stepping-stone in developing the trend of step migration to facilitate the international mobility of students coming from economic and politically weak neighbouring countries which are prone to violence, conflict, a range of cultural practices that stratify societies and exacerbate social inequalities and have labour markets. All of these and many more factors put constraints on individual participants' choices and ability to pursue higher education in western elite HEIs. Thus, step migration becomes a tangible option to turn their dreams into reality and India becomes a stepping-stone on the way to making it happen. Obtaining the first degree in India and making use of the mobility channel available in India (e.g. University agents) helps them become more easily mobile. The trend of step migration in South Asia has been unrecognised until now and this becomes the original contribution of this chapter; it adds to our understanding of student mobilities and migration at large. Finally, the chapter contributes by extending social reproduction theory to south Asia and helps explain the social biographical process in shaping the personal capital formation identified by Xue (2008), Sin (2013a and 2013b), and Carlson (2013). Many of the latter studies were limited to international students, other than South Asian, and this study contributes by filling this lacuna.

# CHAPTER 5 - STUDY ABROAD DECISIONS: PURPOSE AND PROCESS



## 5.1- INTRODUCTION

Conventionally, the 'push-pull model' has dominated academic discussion around how students and their families make judgements, take decisions and rationalise their purposes about studying abroad (Guruz, 2011; Bhandari and Blumenthal, 2011). Up until now, this process has tended to favour social, economic, and political factors as justifications. However, a growing literature now enables us to interpret students' decisions using a social class lens. In doing so, equal attention has been given both to why and how students move abroad for education (Carlson, 2013; Kim, 2011 and 2016; Tarry, 2008). This shift allows consideration of students' individualistic instincts and choices for studying abroad rather than focusing on structural pressures, although external pressures do persist. Structural factors do not explain why people with certain desires, social belongings, and dispositions tend to move abroad when other people, who face similar social conditions, do not. The question as to why people move abroad to study is relatively straightforward, but how they go about making it a reality is an interesting and crucial part of understanding the processes by which decisions to study abroad are made.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore social class interests and influences over students' decisions to study abroad; to understand the role of family commitments and resources in making it possible, and how the choices of destination, subjects of study and HEIs are made. The importance of understanding the early stages of studying abroad is twofold: 1) it provides us with the cultural and social context in which study abroad decisions take place which, in turn, enables us to locate the role of international education in social structuring or the reproduction of class relations; and 2) it helps us to explore how, on an individual basis, students and their families engage in the process of selecting their study destinations, subjects or HEIs that link their studies abroad with their broader life trajectories. The chapter begins with an extensive review of the literature regarding the choices and rationale of study abroad among South Asian communities and highlights the ways in which previous education; family and social class of students influence the decision and strategic use of capitals to make study abroad a reality. This review followed by a discussion of students' perceptions of international education and the factors that influence students' choices and family strategies to look for educational advantages abroad, the decision-making process, and their experiences of immigration to the UK.

## 5.2- THE STUDY ABROAD ASPIRATIONS: EXISTING EVIDENCES

The desire to pursue education overseas is not new to us, and knowledge seeking human intuition could be traced back across history as long as we can remember. However, such a desire, in present time, has been transformed and become a means of social-economic domination, privileging power and prestige. Unlike before, the need to study abroad is wide-ranging. The pursuit of educational advantages differs in the bi-polarised world where students' intentions to attend education beyond national boundaries are shaped by diverse factors referred in the push - pull model (Crossman and Clarke, 2010; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). This approach touches on the surface of motivations for mobilities by listing factors but without making sense of the social contexts in which the urge to study abroad is generated, and how the outcomes of an academic journey are used. Despite this, most of our current understanding comes from this approach, where student mobilities -mainly between sending and receiving nations- are explained using causal relationships between limited numbers of factors. The stakeholder perspective normally considers the role of state policies, HEIs, families, and individual agencies in shaping the student mobility trends. In particular, it explores how students and their families negotiate their choices when making decisions regarding study abroad. On a more welcome note, to take above approach a little further, scholars are now focusing on the social-cultural dynamics of demand and the use of international education, to find out why and how selection of destinations, HEIs, and disciplines or level of study (UG or PhD) works in the era of the global hierarchy of education providers (e.g. University rankings) (Naido, 2006; Marginson, 2008; Rizvi and Lingard, 2010).

The following evidence suggests that student mobilities are becoming a global phenomenon and that the trends of students' flows are worldwide. Two major themes emerge to guide this discussion. 1) Students' horizontal mobilities between developed nations in the global north largely consist of both sending and receiving students with a sense that this contributes to the circulation of knowledge. While 2) students' vertical mobilities between developed (receiver) and developing (sender) nations are associated with dominant one-way flows of students from the global south to the global north, that are regarded as part of 'Brain drain' (Rizvi, 2005 and 2011; Rizvi and Lingard, 2000). Horizontal mobilities in international education often indicate students are privileging access to elite colleagues or world leading HEIs including MIT, Harvard, Oxford, or Cambridge (King, Findlay, and Ahrens, 2010; King and Raghuram, 2013). Alternative

findings suggest study abroad experiences in the developed world are either, a personal pursuit of happiness (Waters, Brooks, and Pimlott-Wilson, 2011), the second chance at success (Brooks and Waters, 2009b), or just to delay in taking responsibilities among UK students studying abroad. The motivation behind attending education abroad is perceived as a source of valuable experiences and way to improving 'soft skills' (Personal capital- Xue, 2008), leading students to reproduce class advantages. Sometimes the achievements occur accidentally due to a perfect match between students' personal traits and the arbitrary culture of education destinations (Waters and Brooks, 2010). The horizontal mobility patterns form mainly due to pull factors. There is no urgency in escaping the education system or social-political spaces in developed nations (Brooks and Waters, 2011b). In contrast, with horizontal mobilities, students from global south normally report much more intense, urgent need to access quality education as many push factors work together to disadvantage them in a highly competitive globalising labour market. Therefore, the motivation among them seeks to find a better life and positional advantage through study abroad. The scarcity or problematic access to elite education push these students to look for advantages elsewhere, preferably in the knowledge producer destinations. The push factors range from economic and political to security and cultural resistance to modernisation as discussed in chapter 4 section 4.2 (Doyle et.al., 2010; Lee, 2013).

Horizontally, excellence and innovation seem to dominate desires, while vertically social recognition of English and scarcity of type of education, particularly technical and scientific; and tough competition due to immense demographic pressures on the local education system are found to influence decisions in the global south (Sidhu, 2011). The use of ICT, well-equipped labs and libraries, an academic culture of freedom to excel and innovate, a practical approach to learning and teaching usually construct quality education. This is subject to competition and policy control in developing nations but is available abroad privately at higher costs. Students mostly tend to favour scientific, technical and management studies due to infrastructure issues in the local education system which learning and reduce employability (Huang, 2013). This is not the case with students in developed nations. Government policies and HEIs in developed countries have boosted their education system with modern facilities and intellectual environment, compared to developing nations, which face severe financial limitations in trying to fund HEIs (Guruz, 2011, Varghese, 2008).

Since student mobility has become a global phenomenon, countries worldwide have seen a dramatic increase in international education. In part, the neoliberal approach to the free market and trade in educational services has made education more attractive and ever accessible, leading to the creation of more study options globally (De Wit, 2011; Brooks and Waters, 2011b; Waters, 2012; Knight 2011 & 2012, Altbach and Knight, 2007). The global competition for a share in the student market has pushed HEIs to achieve recognition in the world rankings. The student mobility patterns are closely associated with a global hierarchy of HEIs (Findlay et al. 2012; Guruz, 2011; Bhandari and Blumenthal, 2011). Research excellence and impact, knowledge production, innovation and originality drive domination of super rich and elite classes to the top leading institutions in the west. Families in the West are in pursuit of personal as well as social class advantages, even though they have access to quality education at home (Brooks and Water, 2009b & 2011b). Similarly, a growing middle class in developing economies follows similar spirit in finding shelter in western education better than their own, if not world class. The tension due to shortage or congestion, in access to employable education in the global south, often intensifies when other political and economic factors add to the shortcomings in the local education system, leading to dissatisfaction among families who are concerned about education and its social class advantages (Waters, 2002, 2003, and 2005). These deficiencies include difficulties in developing the capabilities and infrastructure required to provide a quality environment, poor funding and mismanagement, lack of staff and research facilities, cultural resistance to modern education, together with other structural and functional problems connected with educational inequalities (Brooks, 2012). Nonetheless, the distribution of advantages running through the global hierarchy of knowledge producing HEIs is at the centre of a quest to reproduce class relations and climb the social ladder. Regarding making decisions, there has been an inclination to choose study options higher in value, reputation, and global ranking than are available in local HEIs. This is equally applicable to families in both developed and developing countries. As a result, students and their families pursue educational advantages abroad despite having access to local elite education, which I call a first choice trend and those who could not secure study places at home in their earlier attempts tend to choose study abroad as the second choice (Brooks and Waters, 2011). Given the strength of the education system and economic prosperity in developed nations, the pull effect in generating desire to move abroad with or without institutional help (scholarships or exchange programmes) seems plausible in relation to the better off while the push effect must be greater than pull

motivations among families living in insecurities and facing structural-functional barriers in the developing world. The HEIs in western developed nations are ranked top of the world ranking order thus could easily be associated with educational mobility patterns. Moving towards the top destinations in the West has become the unshakable route.

Apart from the above evidence, the role of education in (re)producing social class advantages has become an overarching approach to associating the social and cultural dynamics of families with student mobility decisions which lead to the (re) production of social class trajectories (Findlay et.al., 2012). The large extension of education tends to disadvantage students by credential inflation in which more people are having similar degrees, which intensify competition and congestion in the labour market (Sin, 2013a). Instead, social classes tend to engage in a struggle to achieve distinction through educational advantages. The tough competition to access elite and privileged forms of education tends to push some families to pursue class advantages elsewhere. This perception is embedded in the access and capacity issues of the domestic education system, and study abroad comes to the rescue of these families as the either first or second choice to make progress. The desire to study abroad does not rely on the expectation of achieving employment at the end, but retaining social status inherent in the family and helping to continue their class trajectories (Sin, 2013a and 2013b). If this is the case, foreign degrees, whether achieved at home or abroad should result in the similar distinctions (Waters, 2009 and 2015). Leung and Waters (2013) and Waters (2010) explain that international education obtained at home through branch campuses may lead to disadvantages due to lack of mobility experiences. Thus, it is not always the credential, which makes a social class, but the embodied culture capital transformed through travelling and through exposure to cultures other than the student's own (Brown, Hesketh, and William, 2004; Li, 2013; Moreau and Leathwood, 2006).

The role of individual agency in decision making varies across nations, yet due to the individualism, freedom and independence in western culture, allows students themselves to be in control of deciding where to go (Tindal et.al., 2015; Rounsaville, 2014). Individuals in developed countries can secure funding and a place in top ranked universities, self-inspired, driven by the pursuit of excellence or happiness and take decisions largely independent of their family aspirations (Shannon-Little, 2012; Canales, 2013). In contrast, prospective students in the developing world often face constraints on choosing HEIs due to heavy the reliance on families in funding their

studies both prior to and during study abroad. They also face tough competition in access to elite HEIs, and overwhelming family influence over their' life choices which makes study abroad a 'family project' rather than a project of self-discovery (Waters, 2005 and 2006). Furthermore, the role of family expectations from study abroad often seems to preoccupy students' preference and choices. This key role puts the family interest first, which implies that students could be achieving advantages not only for themselves but also for their families (Waters, 2015). This does not mean that students are less capable of exercising choices, but they are more likely to be influenced by family interests as well as dependent on family resources when deciding to study abroad. In this vein, it is fair to say that the decision-making often combines the family aspirations with the individuals' struggle to develop his self and gain a competitive edge; these are hard to isolate from one another in the developing world. The role of family support can also be seen in the previous academic achievements and preparedness of students before their study abroad. The effectiveness of previous education has been witnessed in seizing educational spaces and opportunities at international level. Findlay argued that well-prepared students, who have had private schooling, are at an advantage over those with public education, and this gives them to access to renowned HEIs internationally (Findlay et. al. 2012). Students with private education tend to choose study abroad more often than students in the public sector as the public- private divide segregates them, based on their capitals and resources. However, due to a lack of data, it is difficult to say much about the role of previous education in study abroad.

The dominance of English as the language of international business, politics, and governance is seen as a form of currency leading to social prestige and reputation in societies with a colonial history. This too has a pull effect on academic decisions (Andrade, 2006). The social class association with English speaking elites, who have to succeed to secure and accumulate wealth and power relations, has had a status effect on emerging middle classes in which social reputation is built through the use of English and embodiment of Western attitudes (Xue, 2008). The preoccupation with the English language could also be linked to the study of science, technology, medicine, and related modern disciplines, all of which require to be taught in English (Guttmann and Lingard, 2010). In addition, the key factors in helping create study choices and access are the policies in sending and receiving nations, the global spread of services in education targeting the global south, while the commercial drive to maximise share in the

international student market seems to create more options, choices and promise of an optimistic return, making study abroad more attractive and, seemingly, more employable (Gardner and Osella, 2003; Bose and Jalal, 2004; Khadria, 2008 and 2009). The policies of western countries have strategically commercialised their educational products and university places through the use of agents, fairs, and publicity in the media, to create their demand. This strategy works given the shortage of quality education in developing parts of the world (Varghese, 2008).

Diaspora relations are also important in connecting families in sending and receiving countries. In such cases, families seem to plan and execute the study for their children in destinations that are the choice of earlier family migration although the evidence for this is stronger in relation to Chinese and other East Asian families (Wang, 2010; Tian, 2008; Leung, 2013; Gu, 2009). In this respect, student migration follows traditional migratory patterns, which have been from developing Asia to the developed north. Along with the factors discussed above, the potential of students being vulnerable to abuse in the receiving country is a key issue in decisions about if and where to study abroad. The safety and well-being of students in destinations are important and perceptions of risks and insecurities could lead students to avoid certain destinations (Marginson et.al, 2010; Bass, 2012; Milligan et.al, 2011).

So far, it has been shown that decisions to pursue education internationally are not taken in isolation from the social and cultural dynamics of students and their families. The decision goes beyond a push-pull analysis to include choices of study abroad with a globalising HE status, family aspirations to reproduce class advantages and personal expectations of becoming (socially) mobile. Selectivity in decisions derived from students' circumstances thus varies across sending and receiving nations. This, in turn, is complicated by the interplay between the interests of major stakeholders, nation state, families, and students themselves, allowing them to negotiate choices in selecting destinations, disciplines, and HE by status (Altbach and Knight, 2007). Ironically, due to a current lack of data, we do not have much to say about decision-making and stakeholders' role in shaping the choices of students and their families in South Asia. The chapter goes some way towards rectifying this by attempting to uncover how decisions to go abroad are taken among South Asian students and their families.

### 5.3- LONDON DREAM: THE JOURNEY

The concentration of student migrants in global cities such as London has been discussed in the literature (Findlay, 2011; Mulley and Sachrajda, 2011). In fact, British HEIs and the British Council have long been branding London as a symbol of academic excellence to attract students from around the world. However, it is not only UK policy makers or HEIs, but also the popular media, movies, and corporate cultures of South Asian countries stimulate public perceptions in favour of global centres for education such as London. These social influences precede any formal decision-making processes that students undertake as to why and where to attend international education.

Analysis of my data revealed an obsession for choosing London as a study destination, partly informed by film and media, and partly by the social recognition associated with studying in London. Students had their own fantasies about studying and living in London, which influenced their decision to pursue study in the UK. These fantasies began with students' hopes and expectations. I labelled them collectively, the 'London dream'. The purpose of considering the 'London Dream' prior to exploring some of the factors that shape the desire of students to study abroad is to try and capture the particular mindsets of students in South Asia, which seems to underestimate the significant demands related to the competencies and skills required to complete higher education studies in the UK. This mindset is particularly linked with the presence of international students with low competencies who are struggling to progress in British HEIs. Although the 'London Dream' was not the only reason why participants chose London as a study destination, it is nevertheless part of the rationale they give for their decision. The global presence of London, its vibrant cultural and commercial environment, the strong appeal of British HEIs with campuses in London, and personal and family choices are among the many influences frequently cited by participants that relate to their decision to study in the UK.

"Obviously, if you have a British degree regarding how people conceive experiences... so not only the value of the education but the whole experience of being in London and study abroad do matter. People do value it. Especially in getting jobs and in getting promotions, I think they do have an edge."

-Pakistani Highflyers (Case 41)

Data analysis reveals that not all participants and their families exercise logic or reason strategically, but are attracted on the one hand by the perceived glamour of London life,



which is generally constructed by film and popular media, and on the other hand by the powerful image of knowledge production in London, as advertised by British universities in educational fairs around the world. One of the main reasons for using these famous images to attract students is that people love being somewhere that is regarded as highly rewarding and valued in their own social and economic contexts. Thus, going to study in a globally renowned institution or place brings social and cultural advantages to the person who has been there. One participant expressed his family's perceptions of London in these words:

“My father told me that you have to study in London. They do not know anything about England; still, they prefer London to study.”

-Bangladeshi Realist (Case 04)

While another participant expressed personal admiration for London:

“I chose six universities and applied to all 6, and I got through all these. Westminster had the course I wanted, and the location was also really good. I mean, it was not a village I was going to live in London.”

-Indian Female Highflyer (Case14)

The internet, popular media such as film and television and corporate interest in western ways of business are profoundly effective in influencing public perceptions about Western cultures. International professionals who have multinational identities and have a powerful impact on participants' imaginations. Many successful Bollywood movies are made in London. This virtual environment fantasizes western life and makes it desirable, attracting teenagers and encouraging young people to seek new ways of life. Also, the social positioning of students' families helps to reinforce the potential of studying abroad. To some extent, influence comes from social privilege where the task is to maintain that privilege. For some, it is a way of demonstrating their wealthier status, but for others, it is the only opportunity to go beyond their normal lives or escape the boundaries of their own socially constructed identities and recognition. As one Indian female participant said-

“Coming to study in London has always been fascinating to me as you know all Indians always dream about studying and living in London... Landing in London itself was an amazing feeling. Even though it was not LSE, Cambridge or Oxford but the place [London] and terrorism studies at my university were particularly important to me.”

- Indian Female Realist (Case 15)

The reasons that participants present for choosing London over other study destinations include studying in educational super - hubs which can offer opportunities for students

to get involved in academic and non-academic events and gatherings, opportunities to work in multinational organisations alongside their studies, the multicultural dynamics of the city, and the experiences of living in a global city. As one Indian Highflyer stated-

“You have a variety of students coming from around the world. All cultures mixed up and [you can have] a unique experience in London. You go around, walk around and feel like a Londoner. It is an attractive and amazing place to be”  
-Indian Highflyer (Case 26)

The ‘London dream’ thus acts as a powerful influence over students’ choices to study in the UK, but it also increases the hopes and expectations related to what students can expect from a world class education at a university in London. Participants have understood the ‘London dream’ as an important contributing factor in the choices and preferences of students and their families, and this dream is constructed within the students’ social-economic periphery. This means that students with wealthy backgrounds often perceive life in London to be a part of their adventure in the UK which can add value to their experiences, while for less privileged students it is perceived to be a life changing opportunity which is a source of inspiration, as well as a driving force behind their decisions to think and go beyond risk and failure. As one Indian Credentialist puts it-

“Well, people say London is a place of hope and opportunity, so I think I can look and can try without worrying about competition.”

-Indian Credentialist (Case 20)

Similarly, choosing London as a study destination has been a strategic decision for many students. One Pakistani, for example, expressed that-

"I considered the exposure of London as a part of my study; not just because of London as a decent city, as I was born in Saudi Arabia and spent most of the time in Kuwait, (and) Pakistan. So I was not entirely thinking about exposure to London, but it was also an element which can bring some additional advantage. Of course, London is a city that everyone knows. Studying and living in London would bring something extra in my future career. The perception is that if you have a qualification from London it means you know something better than others. People would consider you a valuable asset for their organisation instead of thinking that this person has a degree but doesn't have enough knowledge."

-Pakistani Female Realist (Case 44)

Of course, there are many more reasons as to why students choose the UK as a study destination, and I shall examine these reasons later in the chapter, but here I try to explain the role that personal emotions, feelings and psychological attachment to the

idea of going abroad, in particular to London itself, play in encouraging students and their families to prepare for a life-changing, mobile experience. Existing literature dealing with rational choices in studying abroad have failed to explain why the international student body consists of a variety of people, including both privileged and vulnerable students, who choose similar destinations, disciplines and study locations. The data in this study does not completely support strategic plans or intellectual exercises that students and families stick strongly adhere to but does indicate the vital importance of the future possibilities and adventures that come with mobility experiences, in students' decision-making processes. Students' emotions and feelings come into play at an early stage, even before they begin exercising choices and making decisions about study destinations, subjects, or locations. Middle class strategic responses to challenges in either securing elite study options at home or gaining positional advantages in labour markets have not always been central to the mind of students, whereas projecting themselves, the advantages of being mobile, and seeing the world beyond their home country, are all part of a human instinct that encourages individuals to prepare for adventure, to take risks, and to become empowered. This could be understood as a reason why 'Strugglers' make the decision to study abroad - perceiving the benefits of studying in London with or without making reasonable checks or understanding the challenges involved in moving abroad.

#### 5.4- STUDY ABROAD: FACTORS SHAPING DECISIONS

Students have given a variety of reasons as to why they prefer to study at British HEIs. These range from reasons that are commonly shared with the push-pull literature to those relevant to social demand theories. The degree of desire, therefore, varies depending on individual circumstances and family-social attributes. In this respect, there are three major sources of inspiration that should be considered: 1) in most cases, escaping mediocre education at home and acquiring a competitive edge in the labour market, by undertaking international education, is a reason that is primarily stated by Credentialists; 2) in a very few cases, British education is perceived to be a second chance at success; and 3) among Highflyers and Realists, acquiring a British education is seen as an opportunity to (re) produce existing privileges<sup>12</sup>. For a detailed account

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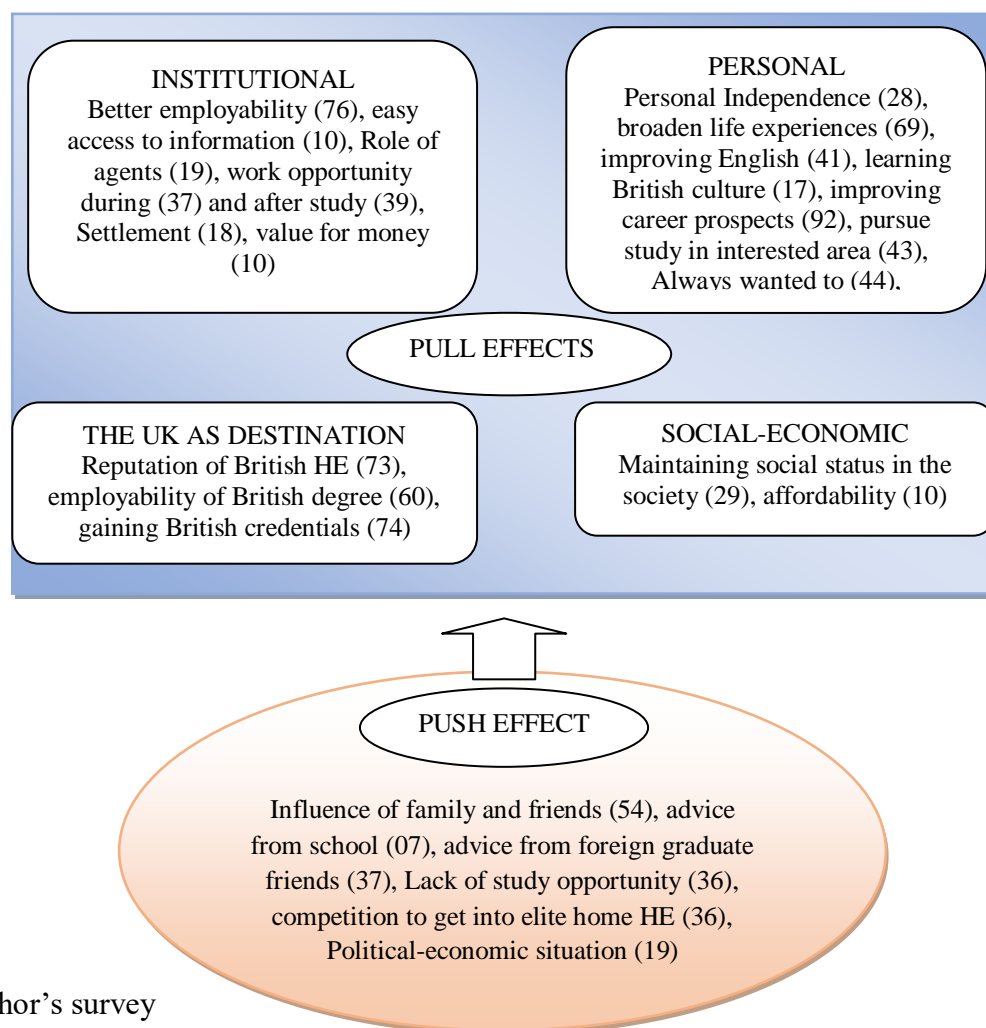
<sup>12</sup> Multiple responses in the survey revealed that 76/125( 23 skipped) respondents were encouraged to study abroad for better employability and 36/125 lacked study opportunities back home along with 19 who were concerned with the economic-political situation at home, while 58/125 respondents stated work opportunities during and after graduation were their motives. 54/125 were influenced by the family to

why South Asian international students choose to study abroad and the UK in particular, see Figure- 14.

Although many reasons given by participants are common amongst the cohort, views emerged frequently, in response to the lack of quality education and employability related issues linked to domestic education. Participants from small countries such as Bhutan, Nepal, and Afghanistan were particularly affected by the lack of opportunities for a good quality of education at home. As one participant stated:

“The field of health psychology in Bhutan is not good, and there is a lack of funding, so I had to take the initiative, and secondly, I wanted to be independent, but staying back in Bhutan I did not see myself as being independent, so I came here”  
 - Bhutanese Female Highfliers (Case 12)

Figure 14-THE PURPOSE OF STUDY ABROAD AND SELECTION OF THE UK



Source: Author's survey

pursue study abroad while 36 found it hard to get into local universities. Only 29/125 were attempting to maintain social status through western education. Clearly, the majority were concerned with the employment related aspects of western education (See Appendix G- Table 1).

Participants were sensitive to political situations in their home countries, which contributed to the scarcity of quality education and influenced the decisions of many participants, especially those who could afford to pursue a quality education elsewhere:

“There were security issues in Pakistan, and my family, which was in Kuwait, did not want me to live in Pakistan without proper support... So I came here as I feel in the UK I could live without trouble. I could have studied in Kuwait, but the standard of study is not reputed to be as good as in the UK... We have some good options in Pakistan, but living alone was an issue, so decided to move to London. .... I had a qualification from the UK, and the education system is better than home. I could have gone to Canada to live with my sister, but the education system was different from my background, therefore, chose to come to the UK.”

-Pakistani Female Realist (Case 44)

Similarly, decisions to study abroad were informed by individuals' perceptions of economic and social conditions at home. Despite the image of Asia as rising, participants often made a connection with the challenges that they faced in accessing future career opportunities. An Indian Highflyer, for example, expressed this in these words:

"India is growing at the macro level, not at the micro level. Living conditions and other factors are still the same. However, there are good institutions, but the quality aspects of teaching, and approach to learning and knowledge transfer is not great, especially in my field. I am interested in fashion management, so this is not mature enough in India. It is still growing at a very slow pace; that's why I had to come out of India"

-Indian Highflyer (Case 26)

The scarcity of quality-employability in local qualifications pushes participants to seek an alternative source for reproduction of capitals, and this is a direct result of the democratisation of education at a local level. The abundance of undifferentiated education, that is, 'credentialism', coincided with the introduction of meritocratic access to national elite educational organisations. This intensified students' desires to secure educational advantages through international education. In fact, while the majority of participants intended to pursue British education for the better employability options that they perceive it to provide, in a few cases participants chose British education because they failed to gain entry into elite education in their home countries. British education was perceived to offer a second chance at success, something that Brooks and Waters (2009b) also witnessed among UK students studying abroad. One participant exemplifies this as:

“The national education system is very stressful, so if I did not come here I would have gone for finance instead of microbiology... [Q- Do you think the education system in Sri Lanka is tougher than the UK?] ....Yes, in my GCSC schooling, I got 4 'A's out of 9 subjects, 3 'Bs and 2 'C's. I was told that I was not good at science. To fall into the category of students who could go into the science stream the minimum requirement was 7 'A's. It was tough. So I choose to study abroad... Once I finish my PG and PhD in the UK, I can say I achieved a higher qualification than they did. In my field of study, the UK is technologically advanced compared to Sri Lanka, so I will be advantaged and more competitive than them”

-Sri Lankan Female Realist (Case 49)

In another similar case, an Indian Realist (Case 32) failed to secure access to medical education in India and as a result, to enable him to prosper, his family arranged for him to study in the UK. In this case, a more demanding entrance criterion for elite national education was a highly influential factor following his decision to pursue international education. However, failure does not always relate to the type of education but also to its international value and the recognition of qualifications (local or international), which can result in students' experiencing difficulties gaining access to the international labour market. One exceptional case is noticeable in this regard:

“This study was kind of forced. Because with the education you have in India, you really cannot prosper outside India. I have done my engineering in electronics. Then I worked in Wipro Technology for three years and in Air India for four years, and then I got married [to a British national]. I searched for jobs, and I got feedback that I have all work experience from India. They were not ready to accept me with that experience so I had to find the way through which I can adjust to the UK system. I decided to do a qualification from British Universities to address this.....I had the best education in India: I spent only 8000 Rs for a year in my engineering, which was value for money and there was no such issue with educational experiences. The only reason to move to the UK was to get a job through a UK qualification”

-Indian Credentialist (Case 18)

Nonetheless, the most significant influence on participants' perceptions was the quality of education on offer at British universities, often associated with the potential for employability and certain labour market returns, and to an extent, with social privileges. Survey responses were indicative of a clear interest amongst participants in improving their potential for employability (76/125 responses) and their career prospects (92/125 responses)<sup>13</sup> through British education. Also, if the data showed that gaining a

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<sup>13</sup> Survey data suggests that 92 respondents were keen to improve career prospects while 74 were interested in obtaining a western credential. 69 respondents were in favour of broadening life experience through study abroad while 43 were pursuing study in their area of interest. 41 wanted to improve their

positional advantage through British education was one of the strategic desires among the majority of participants. A clear sense of the comparative advantage that comes with a foreign degree has been central to the aspirations of many participants:

“Before applying for a PhD, I compared both the advantages and disadvantages of doing a PhD in the UK. I have done my masters from a Pakistani university which was one of the best universities, but the standard was very poor. There was no research at all. You just read a book, memorise answers and get a degree. After that, when I did my masters from the UK I did find creativity, developing in myself and my perspective started changing gradually. The research I did at PG level opened number of ways in front of me and changed my personality, and I became critical [in thinking]”

-Pakistani Female Realist (Case 42)

The purpose of studying in the UK relates to the collective effect of interrelated factors, which lead students to favour international education mainly for its quality, recognition, and potential for employability. The majority of participants tend to rationalise their motives for attending British education, though the quality of British education is always at the heart of their decisions. One Indian Highflyer (Case 34), for instance, stated:

"There were two reasons to choose the UK; one is that a Masters here is a 1-year course compared to 2 years in India or the US and the standard of education is much higher in the UK compared to the global south, even to some extent, much better than US.... I have seen many people graduated as Masters, MPhil and PhDs, but still, they were jobless. I do not know whether our universities are not providing good quality education or people who are coming for education and going back have pride that they have a British qualification, but regarding employment, they get preference. I think it is in our culture. Study abroad brings prestige to you and your family. People will not hire you if you have graduated from local universities. There is a dilemma regarding where you get your education really”

-Indian Highflyer (Case 34)

The reputation of British education, its international curriculum, and the multicultural dynamics of learning and teaching environments in the UK are all factors, which had a major pull effect on students’ perceptions. This is widely acknowledged. Participants tend to notice every detail that led them to develop a comparative vision of the advantages that they believe they will reap from studying abroad:

“After coming here I feel the exceptional experience in the academic field, to get support from the administration and professors are exceptional. Also, the

practical nature of the course is completely different from back in Pakistan. In Pakistan, we do not have a kind of specialised field in which you can do your degree. So I would say that it was the best decision to come over here"

-Pakistani Highflyer (Case 46)

The reasons that South Asian students give as a justification of their need to go abroad are multifaceted and complex to analyse. The evidence suggests that there is no simple answer as to why students from South Asia prefer to study abroad, but it does provide the context within which their choices and reasons can begin to be understood. On the one hand, the scarcity of quality education back home, problematic access to elite education locally, and unpromising labour market returns caused by the devaluation of local qualifications, create a push effect over South Asian students to move abroad to pursue their studies. On the other hand, the quality of education seems to dominate the pull effect, but there are many underlying cultural, family, and personal reasons which influence the decision making.

#### 5.5- FAMILY ATTRIBUTES AND ACADEMIC PREPAREDNESS

Unlike previous studies (Waters, 2002, 2003, 2005 and 2015) evidence from this research found that education abroad is a 'family project' rather than the pursuit of an individual student's dream. In a common pattern, family-based resources, forms of capital, and Diaspora connections in the UK and, more importantly, the family aspirations that lie behind children's education overseas are key to defining participants' different experiences in the UK. The characteristics of participants' families are sufficiently distinct to label families as either '*international families*', those families who either live abroad and/or have sent their children (participants and their siblings) to study abroad for the reproduction of advantages; '*entrepreneurial families*', those who embraced international education for their children in order to advantage their family business with the addition of cutting-edge knowledge and the international exposure of their children; '*traditional middle class families*', those who manage to provide the necessary environment for their children and equip them with the necessary skills to enhance their achievements in academia. The children from these families are often competent and can navigate through state elite or private elite education prior to leaving their home country to study abroad; and '*emerging middle class families*', those relatively less privileged families who have recently gained resources and been inspired to fund international study options for their children to enable them to climb the social ladder. See Table-5 to differentiate the family role and characters of the study cohort.



Table 5- PARENTAL CAPITAL STOCK AND FAMILY CHARACTERS

<i>Class Characters</i>	<i>Culture capital</i>	<i>Economic Capital</i>	<i>Social capital</i>	<i>Case studies</i>
<i>Family types</i>				
<b><i>‘International families’</i></b>	Internationally mobile families, familiarity with Western culture and education, multicultural taste, linguistic and skills competence, elite attitudes and behaviours, going global, elite/private education before attending British education	International occupation or business, significant access to material and financial resources, could provide best available elite/private secondary and higher education to children	Diaspora relations, access to transnational networks of power, social-political recognition, multinational identities (dual citizenships), and family members have settled abroad.	<b>05, 26, 34, 44, 46</b>
<b><i>‘Entrepreneurial families’</i></b>	Ownership of business or dealings with industry, trade and commerce both nationally and internationally; Possession of objectified culture capital, affordability to acquire culture capital	Considerable material resources, easy access to funds, abundance in material wealth, full financial support to children.	Link to an affluent network of power primarily at the national level, social recognition and political stronghold nationally.	<b>14, 17, 28, 29, 30, 35, 41, 43, 45</b>
<b><i>‘Traditional middle-class families’</i></b>	Engage in elite professions (e.g. Lawyer, public servant, technical professions), rich in culture capital and primarily focused on transferring culture capital onto children.	Established economic position in society with easy access to credit facilities, possess assets, have savings and financially secure.	A profession based networking, reliable access to information and support, thoughtful choices and purposeful social contact, family members are professionals and their extended network help (re) production	<b>01, 03, 09, 12, 13, 15, 18, 20, 27, 31, 32, 40, 42, 48, 49</b>
<b><i>‘Emerging middle-class families’</i></b>	Recently appeared on the ladder of social mobility, increasing interest in breaking social boundaries, lacking enough cultural capital but helping children to achieve and accumulate capitals.	Enough financial resources to support children in study abroad. Running a business or traditional occupations, recently emerged on nation's economic surface and aimed to establish social positioning.	Started making strong connections with an existing social network, growing presence in social mobility, networks are limited to people sharing similar social positioning.	<b>02, 04, 06, 07, 08, 10, 11, 16, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 33, 36, 37, 38, 39, 47, 50, 51</b>

Source- Interviews

In general, analysis of the survey data indicates that parental education, social and economic dispositions, and Diaspora connections in the UK are important in providing an appropriate context in which participants can succeed throughout the entire academic journey, especially in the early phases of formal education, including schooling<sup>14</sup>. Also, evidence suggests that well-educated parents were able to arrange a better educational environment for their children and were keen to facilitate their children's academic progression to prepare them for international education (see also Appendix- F).

In many examples, families often choose international education as a part of their strategy to reproduce their social privileges, as a second chance at success, or otherwise just to secure employment in a competitive labour market by way of British credentials. One Sri Lankan Realist (Case 49) provides a rationale for family interest in international education:

“My family managed to stay in education for a long time. My grand mum did her PhD in Cambridge in the UK a long time back. She was working in the education department in Sri Lanka, and she got a scholarship to do her PhD. The achievement influences our overall family, my mum is a teacher, an aunt is a Doctor; the other aunt is also settled. They remained in education for a long time, and all of them had to struggle less to achieve success. I think education has given them strength for that kind of career”

-Sri Lankan Female Realist (Case 49)

In some instances, families forced their children to travel to the UK:

“I have not decided to come here on my own. I was brought here against my wishes. Since I was here, I have learned a lot, and I am glad that I was here; the maturity level you receive here is entirely different. You are not spoon-fed and learn about life. My family is helping me all the way through, and they took the decision to send me here, but it was the best decision, without my consent, and I am happy now.”

-Pakistani Credentialist (Case 47)

This is an example of family choices relating to a second chance in education:

“I was good at study till 10th grade and studying in Delhi, but due to my interest in MBBS<sup>15</sup>, I went to Chandigarh to do my secondary education where I could not achieve as I intend to do. I was given the option to do BDS<sup>16</sup>, but I did not want to do that thus, my parents took me to an agent and consulted for study abroad and with their help, I am here now. I even did not know about London, and it was not my choice to go abroad, but my family wanted me to”

-Indian Realist (Case 32)

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<sup>14</sup> (See Appendix G- Table 3 & 4).

<sup>15</sup> MBBS-Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery

<sup>16</sup> BDS- Bachelor of Dental Surgery

Compared to some privileged parents who had paid attention to the international education of their children at an early point during their school and university education (Case studies-12, 13, 20, 26, 34, 44 and 46), the majority of parents were able to secure, as a minimum, private or elite education which enabled participants to acquire linguistic skills, to better understand their discipline, and to prepare themselves mentally for international academic exposure. Interestingly, there is a parallel trend of privilege seeking behaviours among participants from both highly educated families and business families. As this statement demonstrates.

“My family was supportive of my decision. My parents are not much educated, so they trust me and allow me to go. In my ‘*Caste*’ older people do not know much about education. I have been a good student from the beginning, so they help me at all times, but they cannot help to make a decision, but their attitude towards education was important. They always allow us”

-Indian Credentialist (Case 19)

Participants from well-educated international families tend to achieve higher than those who are from business oriented, entrepreneurial families, but both aimed to secure a successful career from a study in the UK. The choice of the discipline to be studied related to the intention of the participants, either to access a successful career or to contribute to the entrepreneurial success of their family. In contrast, participants with less privileged backgrounds seem to have a positive attitude to obtaining well-paid employment with a British qualification (See Table-3). Some participants were in a precarious position in this respect, as they suffered from a difficult transition through British education. This was especially the case with Strugglers who lacked family support or the social and economic privileges that helped others to have a safer transition (Case studies- 06, 21, 25 and 33).

In some cases, families have effectively used (Case study 17, 43, 47, 48, and 49) the South Asian Diaspora in the UK to make sure of their children's safety, well-being, and comfort while there. In these cases, a family member living in the UK was a major deciding factor in sending participants to study at an HEI. Pakistani participants are amongst the majority of those who had access to direct family support in London. One Indian Credentialist (Case 17) a Pakistani Realist (Case 48), a Pakistani Credentialist (Case 47) and a Sri Lankan Realist (Case 49) had been living with their relative's family in London and described the positive impact that having family in London had over the course of their studies. In contrast, many Strugglers had to deal with the non-cooperation of family members in their decision to go to the UK. For example, case studies 06, 33 and 25 are students who could not get enough support from their families to study abroad. As a result, they had a hard

time in the UK due to a lack of the family finances and support, which their counterparts had enjoyed.

The family background of participants was found to be extremely important in students' successful progression in British higher education. The family support in preparing participants academically and helping them gain private or elite secondary education even before attending British education has been noticed in the data. Personal drive and the aspirations of less privileged participants still matter in their progression but, for the most part, family resources, both material (finance) and in the form of cultural-social capital, have been found to be influential in creating a positive impact on the participants' experiences, especially among participants with a privileged background. The evidence in this study supports the assertion that family privileges enable participants to acquire the right amount of capital and prepare themselves for international education so that they obtain maximum benefit from their experience. The difference in family attributes has a relative association with the likely progress that participants made during their study in the UK. The particular characteristics of the family associated with the thriving experiences of Highflyers are rare amongst Strugglers. Accordingly, the level and amount of capital that a family gives in helping to prepare participants for their international journey was perceived to yield advantages and benefits relative to their family attributes.

The family attributes of participants suggest a new division of families: international families that are living and working internationally and consider international education as a way in which to reproduce the advantages for their children and, entrepreneurial families who tend to benefit from western ways of management and business by sending their children to the west to study at British HEIs. Apart from these privileged families, middle-class families and newly emerging middle-class families send their children to study abroad to secure employment by acquiring positional advantages.

## 5.6- PREPARING FOR THE UK: STEP MIGRATION IN SOUTH ASIA

Academic preparation to pursue study abroad normally does not involve prior education other than in one's own country, but it is not the case in South Asia. In other words, the study abroad journey among South Asian students is not a straightforward process involving sending or receiving nations only, but sometimes it is mediated by regional preparatory HEIs too. To present this, 'step migration' is relatively a new term I use to refer

to a systematic progression towards the final study destination. This strategic approach involves a sensible use of regionally available opportunities for capital accumulation that strengthen skills and personal abilities of students to help them succeed in western education. As discussed in Chapter 1 (1.4.1) and 4 (4.2.5), the regional educational hubs in South Asia, e.g. India, have been hosting students from neighbouring nations to help them through the education they could offer regionally. However, due to a lack of existing data, it was hard to associate regional student mobility patterns in South Asia with international trends. The evidence in this study helps to fill this gap.

Many participants in the study cohort went through regional HEIs prior to beginning their academic journey in the UK. This strategy could also be linked with early mobility experiences, which gives confidence and skills to students aspiring to go even further, to the west. Two Bhutanese female Highfliers (Case 12, 13) took their undergraduate studies in India; two Afghani students (Realist-01, and one Credentialist-02) went to Pakistan. Similarly, some students choose to study beyond South Asia before going to the UK and went to China (Indian Credentialist-20), Indonesia and Singapore (Indian Highflier-26), Dubai (Indian Highflier-34), Kuwait and Pakistan (Pakistani Female Realist-44), and Saudi Arabia (Pakistani Highflier-46) (Please see Appendix- F). It is possible that step migration could be a strategic response to the shortcomings in local education and participants who go nearby to pursue education eventually end up thinking of approaching the British education system due to its perceived benefits. In this vein, step migration at regional level becomes part of international student migration as it helps many students from problematic or small nations to prepare well, not only to access good HEIs in the west but also increase the chances of successful career outcomes.

The role of India in shaping trends of '*Step migration*' in South Asia is exceptional. As explained in chapter 1 (Section 1.4.1) and chapter 4 (Section 4.2.4), South Asian nations struggle to cope with many challenges and thus find it hard to satisfy the expectations of their middle-class families and youth. Despite facing a similar challenge, India has been able to outperform other South Asian neighbours when it comes to providing cost effective education close to home. Indian has a better educational infrastructure and provides access to cost effective study options, and thus, comes to rescue the rescue of families pursuing class advantages through Indian education. By providing fairly standard, cost effective, and close-to-home educational opportunities, India not only becomes a favourable regional study option but also become a stepping-stone. Undeniably, India seeks to play an active role in regional development by helping neighbour countries. India has open borders with

Nepal and Bhutan with easy access to education and employment. Similarly, India offers scholarships and educational spaces for their brightest students to help them develop essential 'soft skills' and the linguistic competence required for becoming successful, far away, in the west. The role of India in shaping the process of '*Step Migration*' has not been picked up by scholars earlier. However, it is equally important to understand how skilled migration from problematic nations in South Asia is formed. There is a serious lack of information on other South Asian nations and their active role in step migration. It could be assumed that Pakistan and Bangladesh may be hosting international students from nearby states too, but we cannot be precise about such trends due to lack of evidence.

## 5.7- DECISION MAKING: CHOICES, PREFERENCES AND INFLUENCES

Despite having developed an understanding of why South Asian students choose to undertake a British education, it is still relatively unclear as to how actual decisions are made, what are the social and cultural dimensions of this process, and how available resources impact on participants' collective and individual choices. The processes by which South Asian participants and their families make decisions on several crucial aspects of studying in the UK seem to be thoughtful and economically informed. In this process, resources, particularly material resources, are key to enabling participants to make the most suitable choices and, to some extent, restrict the ability of less privileged students to create and make better choices while enabling those that are more privileged to reach favourable decisions successfully. The evidence suggests that participants with a privileged background had more options when choosing their discipline or university than students with fewer resources, whose choices were more limited. Family preferences and institutional influences make it harder for participants to make decisions, but students that are more privileged are in a better position than those from less privileged backgrounds. Thus, students with prior exposure to elite or private education locally were better positioned to negotiate their choices and preferences than their native counterparts who lacked privileges. Two Pakistani Highflyers (Case 41 and 46), and one Bangladeshi Realist (Case 09) in particular had more options to choose from. For instance:

"I was working in Pakistan all the time during my decision making. I applied to several universities, apart from Westminster, for funding. I got an offer of full funding from China also, but I was looking for a better option. It was too difficult to study for two and half years in China, and I did not want that. I am the person who wants a balance between family life and education...I applied to many places apart from Westminster. I got a partial scholarship from Sheffield University, but I

got full funding from Westminster, so I took that opportunity. My decision was dependent upon funding"

-Pakistani Female Highflyer (Case 41)

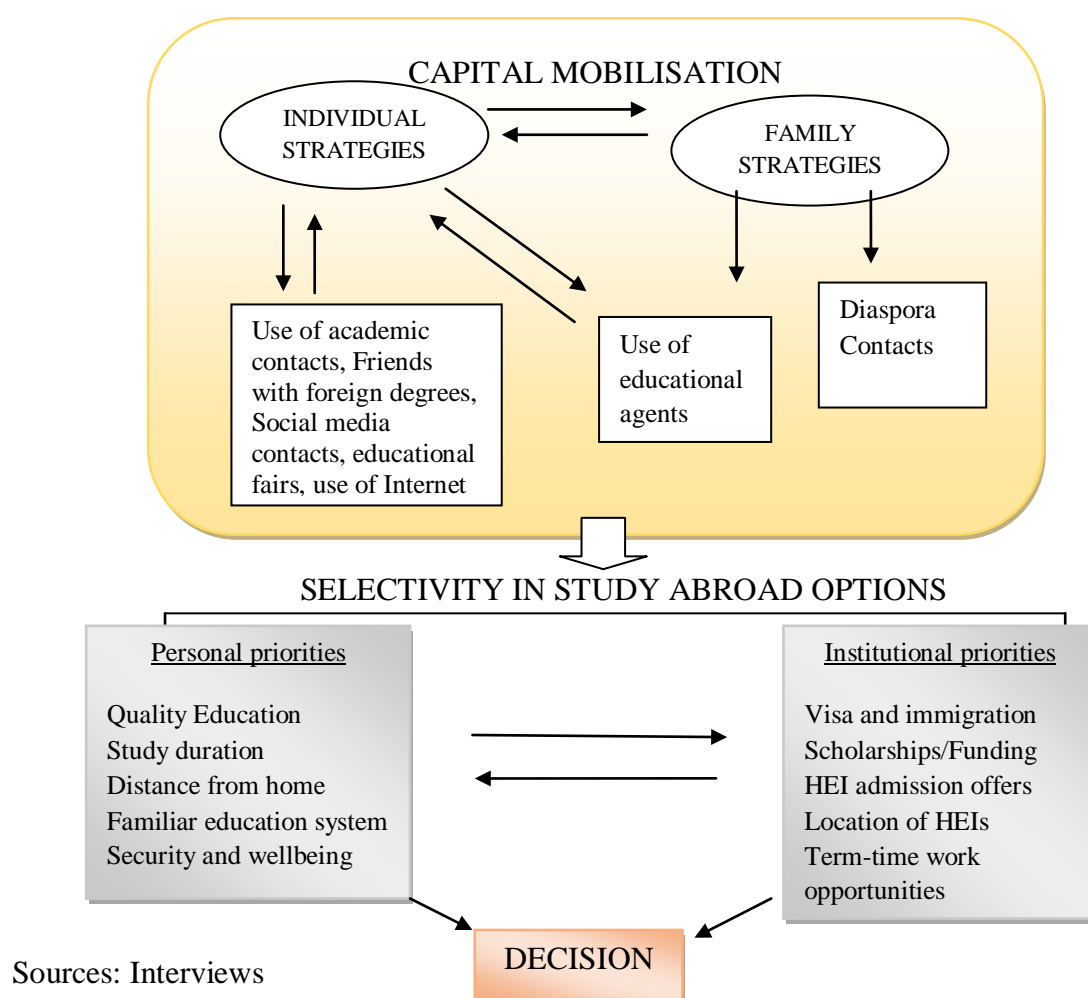
Choosing from a selection of available options, whether it is a matter of choosing a particular university, a particular discipline, or simply choosing to work during term-time, involves three main stakeholders: parents, institutions, and the students themselves. Family or parental choices meanwhile are usually collectively made and influenced by the social context. The institutions like HEIs and nation state granting visas have been an important stakeholder in decision-making. Personal and family choices of study abroad entirely dependent on how one can secure a study place and obtain a visa in order to attend a university which in fact require a huge exercise of documentation and consultation. Participants themselves were most important in taking a decision, which was informed by their personal interests, ambitions, motivations, and dreams.

The study found that families of South Asian participants are key decision makers and can go as far as helping participants to choose their destination country, for example, the UK. The families usually do not control the decision-making process about the choice of subjects or HEIs, but instead, use assistive strategies to influence these decisions. Families, as collective entities, were able to assist participants by providing them with support and significant contributions towards fees and the living cost and, to some extent, by helping participants to be accepted by their destination of choice, by making use of university agents who would help them to secure university places. Families play their most influential part during the early phases of their children's formal education, including secondary education. There is little that they can do to help students to perform well at university, so their role in the UK has been limited except where there may be Diaspora support. However, this was still quite limited. Figure 15 shows how decisions are made.

In terms of subject selection, it seems that competent or privileged participants were much more focused, aware, and realistic, incorporating their choice into their long-term career paths (Sri Lankan Realist Case 49; Bhutanese Highflyer Case 12; Pakistani Highflyer Case 41; Pakistani Realist Case 42 and 44; Indian Highflyer Case 34 and Indian Highflyer Case 14). Privileged participants were able to extract useful information and were therefore in a relatively better position than those who had little or no access to institutional information. Private and authorised university agents helped those who already knew how to use the information provided. Less privileged participants were heavily influenced, rather than usefully informed, by these brokers and seemed to have less control over the decisions that

they were going to make. The decision-making process also involved the best use of resources. Many participants considered economic reasons, when choosing institutions or disciplines, above the quality of education or the ranking of the universities. There are some examples where participants compromised their choices to preserve financial resources, while others simply had no such control. Ambition, control, vision, the realisation of potential and self-confidence are all factors that drive the success of more privileged students.

Figure 15- THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS



Apart from financial factors, participants' well-being (e.g. Indian Credentialist Case 17; Sri Lankan Realist Case 49; and Pakistani Credentialist 47), and the distance of the study destination from their home country (e.g. Bangladeshi Realist Case 09; Indian Realist Case 31; Pakistani Highflyer Case 45) were important influences on the decision making process. For example:

"I had an option between the US and the UK, but I had health issues and could not travel that far so decided the UK, also for Undergraduate, the UK was a much more viable option which was close to my home" -Indian Realist (Case 31)



The security of participants, especially among females (e.g. Pakistani Realist Case 43 and 44), the duration of study (e.g. Indian Highflyer Case 14; Indian Credentialist Case 19), and the widely accepted ease with which students could obtain a visa and comply with the British immigration regime, compared to other destinations, were also important preferences. The families of two Pakistani female Realists (Case 43 & 44) were particularly concerned about their safety in Pakistan, which led the families to consider the UK as a potential study destination. In their own words:

“I have been to London 4 times before, and I have an uncle living here so my father thought it could be a better choice, I have been connected to London and coming on and off. I do not live with my uncle, but he is nearby so from a security perspective my family could not afford the risk to send me alone here. I am a Muslim and belong to an Asian family, so you know how hard it is to send girl abroad on her own, and I am just 18, so it was a big headache for them. So my father told me if you like London why not London”

-Pakistani Female Realist (Case 43)

In the majority of cases, the decision to study abroad is a collective effort in which family members and participants take part in decisions about potential destinations. Though selectivity in HEIs choice and subjects are often grounded in personal interests and career aspirations, families usually do not engage and tend to support students' choices and preferences. Another factor with an important role in facilitating decisions was the agents who mediate British HEIs and help students to reach a decision. UK universities pay commission to agents for their assistance with international student recruitment, but the unofficial role they take upon themselves is to guide students in clearing UK immigration. This has been presented in the literature a mammoth task.

## 5.8- VISA-IMMIGRATION AND TRANSITION TO THE UK

Visas and immigration have been one of the most discussed areas in student migration research and a particularly heated topic in British politics. As discussed in Chapter 1, scholarly criticism of the recent student visa reforms in the UK suggests they make the international student community feel unwelcome. However, without evidence, it is hard to build an accurate picture of such claims, especially in the case of South Asian students. This study provides evidence of the positive experiences of the ongoing transition of the student immigration regime in the UK. This is also be discussed in later chapters. For now, as we are making sense of the experiences of participants, before their actual departure to the UK. Findings suggest that the process, which involves documentation, visa

applications, and access to support in getting their visa, stand alone as the single biggest barrier to students' successful move to the UK. Evidence shows that, in the majority of cases, participants had a positive and welcoming experience of the student visa regime. However, some complained about troublesome situations and, on rare occasions, about failure too; although these seem to be the exceptions rather than the norm. In fact, the data collected shows that the straightforward British visa regulations and processes were a contributing factor for students choosing the UK. Simple and quicker visa processing by the UK authorities had a significant effect on participants' perceptions and revealed the comparative benefits of the British visa system for students considering studying abroad.

International mobility in education involves a long and bureaucratic process of credential recognition, the arrangement of necessary documents, and various technical and legal procedures. The documentation requires attention to legal issues related to moving from one country to another country and managing the expectations of the destination country. Working individually on arranging document can be costly in terms of both time and money. Supplying documents to universities such as the suitability of the documents, ensuring that the document is in the right format, interpretations of grades, and correct statements of finance or funding sources can be complicated and time-consuming. The validity of documents is crucial to a successful visa and immigration process, and most well-informed participants were able to deal with these challenges. Access to the right information was not widely available to all students. Students with privileged background had access to a strong network of key informants and were the ability to judge the information to make better choices. Most of the information is available online, but there remains a practical issue, which relates to the student's ability to match their eligibility with the requirements for acceptance. Below are some largely positive examples, which demonstrate the experiences of many participants who have passed through visa processing:

“The UK was easier to get visas. In the US and other countries, it is more difficult to obtain visas. I did not get any request for an interview because I was a regular student back there and the institution I chose in London, Institute of business and management was very good”  
-Bangladeshi Credentialist (Case 10)

Also:

"I never tried [US], but I heard that USA admission procedure is quite long. It takes six months to get a response from the university, and then the visa queue is long and there are many other formalities. The UK was an option to come here easily...I got (UK visa) smoothly in a week, so; however, they called me to answer some questions. I used to hear about the system here (the UK) becoming worse regarding the visa. I did not find any difficulty. I had a perception from people like, it is very

hard to come here, but it was very convenient for me, and I think if you put the right documents then you will get visa” -Pakistani Highflyer (Case 46)

It is unsurprising that the points-based visa system in the UK must have helped privileged participants who would have been in good position to provide the appropriate documents and who would have had access to institutionalised sources of information and support. One participant who had a positive experience stated:

“Applied for my visa three days before the expiration of my previous visa and I luckily got my visa. It was very quick”

-Bangladeshi Struggler (Case 06)

Some of the statements reflect the students’ privileged backgrounds, which helped them to get their visa easily. For instance:

“I just submitted my visa application, and I got that within three days. Because I had an official passport, so I think they took it exceptionally. I did not face any problem regarding the visa, either for my husband or me”

-Bangladeshi Female Realist (Case 03)

In contrast, there some students did have difficult experiences of the immigration process:

"Applying for a student visa was difficult for me. I do not know why my visa was rejected. I was supposed to come last September (2012) but due to a 'processing fault,' my visa was refused. Then I applied for administrative review. I got my visa but to get that I had to reapply. In the second attempt, I got that which was a bit disappointing for me. I did everything I could carefully, but somehow it was rejected”

-Indian Female Realist (Case 15)

Although rare, one participant (Case 47) was particularly disappointed due to his ethnic origin, which he thinks, had affected his visa procedure.

“I came as a privately funded student. I did not use any agent. However, I had a bad experience. Because my surname is Khan, I have been through a hellish experience. I have been rejected a couple of times for silly reasons. I am annoyed with them [Visa authorities]. I am not very happy with UKBA that is what I can say”

-Pakistani Credentialist (Case 47)

Many participants chose to get help from educational agents and immigration agencies, which were put in place or authorised to help prospective students in preparing for visa applications, but this is meant to be assistive only. In general, the use of agents has been a source of comfort and relief for students and is useful in increasing the success rate in gaining visa due to applications adhering to policies and legal requirements. Moreover, agents, in some cases, seem able to take advantage of their mediator position to negotiate study places for students, on their behalf, as this example shows:

"I did not choose this university by myself, but I got help from an agent who had links with universities and despite the fact that I was too late, the agent was able to reserve a place in the University for me. I did not consider ranking or other stuff in deciding the university. I think all universities in London are the same; they stand for equal value, so the ranking does not make any difference"

-Indian Realist (Case 32)

In this particular case (Case 46), a participant had a trouble in dealing with a private agent. In his own words:

"I applied through an agent because I thought that it would be a quick process. I knew that it is not helpful to me because they are not going to do anything for me, but I wanted my process managed quickly because I was looking for a scholarship. So I did an online search and did many things myself. Afterwards, they asked me, not for a fee, but they said, 'You got a scholarship, so you need to give us a percentage of that scholarship', and I was astonished and thought, 'Who the hell are you!' I did not pay them. I told them that this is not the case with me. I am more educated than most people, but it happens there. It is very common. It is an issue with students. Initially, they offered a free service, but later they asked for money. They are just an agent. I did enquire about this with university, and they said, 'You need not to worry'"

-Pakistani Highflyer (Case 46)

From this discussion, one fact is clear: visa and immigration clearance have been treated as a significant process that distinguishes genuine participants from bogus students and provides access to British education. Therefore, getting a visa is, in itself, considered as a passport to the UK. Given the importance of the visa process, participants were reasonably careful and had largely positive experiences with only a few exceptions. Even though the process of obtaining a visa was quite clear to many participants who successfully navigated the process individually, some required more support and either accessed university support services or private agents, depending on whichever was most easily available and convenient. Either way, most participants were satisfied with the outcome of their visa application and admitted that the process of visa and immigration for the UK was fair and transparent, unlike other OECD destinations. This finding contrasts with the claims of many scholarly attempts to stop international student migration being politicised. I discuss this in later chapters, but for now, it is important to understand that participants' initial experiences of getting through the UK visa process had been positive and their real departure to the UK was now imminent. To conclude, it appears that the difference in levels of capital and support that participants could draw upon helped some participants to deal with the complex immigration processes, while others had problems due to a lack of, or weak support, information and levels of capital.

## 5.9- CONCLUSION

There is no easy answer as to why South Asian students travel abroad for education. Instead, there is a range of socio-economic factors shaping those decisions and those decisions are socially constructed. Since the social-cultural context of South Asian nations is diverse, the factors that are responsible for triggering student mobilities from the region are varied too. They range from a severe shortage of quality education to the abundance of mediocre education. Given national capacity and economic strength, push factors -the problematic access to or unavailability of quality education- overlap with pull factors – quality education- and with an urgent need to escape the disadvantages of national education. This is more or less equally applicable to all South Asian nations. The aspirations of students and their families also vary as the desire and use of foreign education changes according to country and society. It becomes complicated as family interests in study abroad operate beyond national boundaries.

Despite all the complexities, the need to access quality education has been a common theme under which families with diverse backgrounds pursue social class distinctions. The social and cultural context has been profound in making middle-class families (establish and newly emerged) look for distinction through foreign education. Western influence over the public imagination, through film and media and the popular marketing strategies of HEIs to promote western style education have been a part of the cultural changes that are taking place in a globalising South Asia. On an individual level, this imagination aspires to seek mobility experiences abroad, particularly to places of global recognition. Students consider the place of study (London) is just as important as the reputation of British education. This is likely to help in shaping the decision to choose post-1992 universities in London rather than thinking of approaching to elite HEIs. From a family perspective, study abroad comes to rescue of many families that are affected by social and demographic changes in society making their access to quality education difficult locally (Ghimire and Axinn, 2006; Ranasinghe and Hartog, 2002). The family context in decision-making becomes inevitable when a range of family resources and strategies are employed to set their children on a particular trajectory. These family investments could be traced back to the academic preparation of participants throughout their childhood. In this vein, the families' backgrounds and the difference in resources tend to affect, differently, students' choices and their preparation for study abroad. More broadly, 'international families' were equipped with mobility advantages and appeared to favour international education, over regional or national, as the first choice while 'entrepreneurial families' pay more attention

to generating social recognition through foreign knowledge and qualifications, quite similar to 'emerging middle-class families'. Apart from the above, 'families with established social positions' appeared to use foreign education as a strategic response to congestion in access to national elite HEIs, to reproduce class advantages as either first or second choice. In general, the diversity explained above in the family background, and family motivations behind study abroad tend to support the idea of heterogeneity in South Asian student population.

The family aspirations behind study abroad suggest a clear intention to sustain social class statuses and reproduce them over time that is similar to the findings of Waters (2005, 2006, and 2015). The purpose of attending education abroad is not solely limited to achieving employment after finishing education, but to take its advantages further in building an entrepreneurial identity, earning social recognition, and retaining social class status inherited from family and helping to continue its social class trajectory. In this respect, family background and social positioning seem to play a major part in decision-making. The social desire to use foreign education strategically in reproducing class advantages could be associated with the pressure to avoid being overtaken by families emerging on the social hierarchy as a new element of the middle class e.g. historically disadvantaged taking benefits of reservations in India. Similarly, new middle-class families lack family inheritance of culture capital and social recognition, unlike the established middle classes or other wealthy families who are thriving in the social hierarchy (Utsa, 2014). Foreign credentials are seen by these families as currencies to make their way to up the social ladder and earn respect among the other social classes (Rao and Hossain, 2012). In this respect, the status of HEIs did not matter for many participants as long as foreign credentials are achieved in global cities or leading western destinations e.g. London, the UK. Also, the mobility experience, as part of the family character of students, has dominated their choice to study abroad. Families living and working abroad tend to prepare their children and send them to preferred international destinations. Their efforts were more intense and more focused than other family types, resulting in increased competence of students, greater ability to perform well in an academic situation and thrive when entering into international education.

Regarding the process of decision-making, both individual participants and their respective families made the study abroad decisions jointly. In doing so, a process of capital mobilisation is observed in which forms of capitals were deployed aiming to secure the advantages best suited to personal and family aspirations. Dominated by family interests in

students' education, decisions were also funnelled by personal and institutional priorities that made a final impact on the selection of HEIs and began the immigration process to travel to the UK. These priorities were also unique to individual cases and helped them to rationalise their choices. Moreover, selectivity in choosing HEIs and discipline related aspects normally favour British education, as a legitimate source of valued education, thus attention does not seem to focus on the global ranking of HEIs. The selection of the university does not seem to derive from the status or reputation of HEIs but the added advantages of attending a particular university e.g. easy access, funding opportunities and location of HEIs. In particular, students with privileges were able to exercise more choices than other participants, yet showed an inclination towards HEIs with added advantages other than their ranking or status. This finding helps us explain why students, even Highfliers, were ready to accept post-1992 universities in London. If we consider the role of family-based forms of capitals, not all families seek to join top-ranked British HEIs e.g. Oxford. To succeed in gaining access to and completing studies in global elite HEIs, one must hold the required stock of capitals and should be able to accumulate capitals at these elite universities. Apparently, families vary regarding possessing a stock of capitals and during the decision-making process, thus, are less likely to approach elite HEIs. This recognises that South Asian countries are home to a very limited number of HEIs of high reputation, which is becoming congested in relation to study places they can offer. For instance, top Indian institutes like AIIMS, IITs, and IIMs are representative of some of the best HEIs in South Asia, but cannot accommodate a large group of students. Access to such HEIs is governed by tough competition. Thus many bright students are forced to seek educational advantages elsewhere. What is more, compared to national education, a study in world class HEIs is relatively expensive, globally competitive to enter and requires additional resources to succeed. Not all South Asian students, including the bright ones, are willing to pay a premium price in top-ranked HEIs for the education they could afford at a new university (Post-1992). Since a majority of the study participants were targeting British credentials for their apparent advantage, it is less likely among many participants that they will sign up for higher study commitments in old British HEIs. Given the global competition to access old British universities, post-1992 universities that are welcoming international students to make their campus multicultural and truly international and to improve the status and rankings, still appear acceptable as they ready to provide education with added advantages e.g. funding or bursaries to attract Highfliers. Also, step migration should be seen as a strategic approach to addressing the shortcoming of some participants, in previous education and personal skills, who prepare themselves by attending HEIs close

to home, before approaching British HEIs. This trend has been overlooked in previous research, but it is equally important to understand how students with specific backgrounds approach the selection of British education and prepare themselves for successful outcomes. Apart from HEI selection, an unprecedented finding of the study suggested that visa and immigration processes have a significant impact on the selection of the UK. In an unanticipated finding, data has revealed that visa and immigration procedures to the UK have been easy going and quick to process, leading to rejection of the claims of the negative impact of student visa reforms in the UK on students' perceptions and experiences (Blinder, 2011; Mulley and Sachrajda, 2011).

#### 5.10- CONTRIBUTION

The contribution of the chapter has been to understand and present the rationale behind study abroad decisions and role of family support among students coming from diverse backgrounds in South Asia. The chapter contributes theoretically to Bourdieu's vision by adding the dominant role of families and their social class position in shaping the desire to study abroad. Theoretically, Bourdieu's notion of social reproduction seems to play out among student migrants from South Asia as the family seeks to secure or (re) produce advantage through British education. We now know that desire to study in the UK has been a part of the social and cultural pressure that families face and which leads them to mobilise strategically, their resources to reproduce advantages. In doing this, families mobilise capitals internationally to set their children on a particular pathway to social distinction. The chapter contributes empirically by revealing the individual pursuit of academic advantages. The emotional and personal attachment of participants with the London 'dream' becomes the breeding ground in which students are inspired to choose study in London and against which, other contextual factors recede. Additionally, the research findings contribute to the discussion of student visa reforms in the UK by presenting contrasting evidence to suggest there were no major effects on students' intentions to study in the UK. Instead, they found it surprisingly easy to get through the visa process. The current study contributes by revealing the social and economic pressures on families to choose study abroad as a consequence of the influence of social and cultural changes, which shape public perceptions to favour western values and global cities and associate study abroad with the notion of 'achievement'.

The contribution of the chapter has been to understand student migration using a procedural perspective. In doing so, the chapter explores the process through which study



migration decisions are taken and the ways in which regional patterns of student mobilities link with international student mobility trends, discussed as ‘step migration’ between South Asian countries. Previously unknown trends of step migration help us recognise the role of India as a stepping-stone for international students of small neighbouring nations to take advantages of regionally available opportunities to accumulate capitals, which then further enable them to progress on to international destinations. Students in South Asia use regionally available educational opportunities, particularly in India, to strengthen their existing stock of capital before approaching international HEIs. This unique insight into the process in which regional student mobility trends are shaped, helps us understand the social biographical accounts of students who combine regional-international opportunities in pursuit of academic distinction. The trend of ‘step migration’ in South Asia exemplifies the social and economic pressure that students and their families are facing in parts of the region and shows their strategic use of cost effective regional study options to develop international mobility trajectories.

An important theoretical contribution of this chapter has also been to recognise the social class division of participants’ families living in and out of South Asia. Families with mobile experiences (i.e. International) enjoy the privileges and set their children onto an international academic mobility path while a shift in the middle-class hierarchy consisting of entrepreneurial, traditionally established, and families that are newly emerged on the social ladder, means that others draw on study abroad options to take advantage of rapidly changing social class relations and patterns of dominance in South Asia. In this respect, study abroad has become a family project in which families are obsessed with social class advantages and this dominates choices and decisions relating to study abroad and particularly, to the UK. In doing so, family and student, mobilise their capitals to decide where to go and negotiate their choices in the face of opportunities of easy access, funding and family support in London. The impact of such negotiations could be seen in the choice of post-1992 University in London among the entire study cohort. Even ‘Highfliers’ type students were choosing study options at a post-1992 University because of scholarships being offered instead of selecting HEIs on the basis of world ranking or reputation. Finally, there is sufficient evidence to reject the claims that recent student visa reforms might deter students from South Asia applying to study in the UK. This leads us to support the idea that the economic and social advantages of British education have been central to decision making and that this rationale is more likely to influence student migration from South Asia.

## CHAPTER 6 - LIFE AT A BRITISH UNIVERSITY: ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES AND BEYOND

## 6.1- INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to understand the participants' experiences of academic transitions and university life in the UK. The chapter begins with a brief overview of literary evidence to highlight how international students progress academically and report aspects of university life which help or challenge them to achieve success. In doing so, the chapter develops a thematic account of academic participation, relationships and networks within and outside of the classroom, their construction of quality, and how students receive care and support at the University during their education. In addition, the academic performance of students is discussed along with how they distinguish themselves from their peers. The difficulties and challenges in achieving success in education are then discussed to see how the social and economic dynamics of individual students influence their very personal experiences of British education. The chapter concludes after underlining the positive impression given in the findings, of the students' overwhelming satisfaction with their education and university life in the UK. In doing so, the study provides fresh evidence to the international student migration debate in the UK. A summary of the findings is presented at the end of the chapter.

## 6.2- STUDENT LIFE IN TRANSITION: A REVIEW OF ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

The predominant focus of earlier studies on the experiences of international students in their destination country has been on their educational transitions through different educational contexts and challenges in the process of adjustment in and adaptation to a new academic system (Russell, Rosenthal and Thomson, 2010). Students' coping strategies in response to overcoming these barriers have also been explored (Richardson et.al. 2012; Montgomery, 2006 & 2010). This growing area of research gets complicated when combined with political and economic restraints on the achievements of international students e.g. effects of visa reforms or paid work on attainment (Sondhi, 2013). In fact, it is an overwhelmingly problematic and complex site of investigation to address international students' particular needs and expectations in a highly demanding education system in the UK. Previous studies have encountered wide-ranging issues and problems that, in general, suggest a troublesome or challenging transition of students from Asia in the UK. Using Bourdieu, I attempt to review such findings based on the evidence of this study.

The experiences of international students' academic transition are usually considered as an area of concern, not only for students but also for HEIs in the UK, who have a need (duty)

to look after overseas clients (Lillyman and Beennet, 2014; Schweisfurth and Gu, 2009). This is due to the significant change students in the learning environment, the culture shift, use of language in both academic and social situations, and the entirely different ‘arbitrary culture of HEIs’ (Qing, 2008; Doherty and Singh, 2005). The competitive culture of academic excellence at British HEIs and their high expectations of students, including those coming from abroad, to perform well largely form the basis of which they are ranked and recognised globally. However, this expectation does not recognise differences in the general student population between native and international students. Raising the bar of standards is not as challenging for native students as for those coming from developing nations with diverse bundles of capitals, which may or may not function within the academic culture of the HEIs they attending. This is the subject of numerous studies focusing on how students with different cultural schemes achieve in another cultural setting. In doing so, researchers have identified problems relating to social-psychological adjustment in and adaptation of British education (Ayano, 2006; Andrade, 2006; Russell, Rosenthal and Thomson, 2010; Wu, 2008; Wu and Hammand, 2011; Yang, 2008), social relations and networks (Brown, 2009; Taha and Cox, 2016), and inclusion in and outside classroom (Nomnian, 2008; Jiang, 2013). In addition, the performance of students from the developing world struggling to succeed in the UK has been an overarching theme for those aiming to understand how educational inequality persists and is reproduced (Sin, 2009, 2013a & 2013b; Peacock and Harrison, 2009).

Studies have discovered poor performance (Xu & Hampden-Thompson, 2012), and poor use of academic skills are common among international students (Duanmu, Li and Chen, 2009; Lebcir, wells and Bond, 2008; Morrison et.al. 2005; Xiong, 2005). This is mainly due to a lack of critical thinking (Shaheen, 2012; Peacock and Harrison, 2009) and academic honesty (Le Ha, 2006; Paswan and Ganesh, 2009), the impact of the ongoing adjustment process and psychological changes (Brown and Holloway, 2008; Brown, 2009) that are usually seen to students’ participation and attention in course work (Liu, 2013; Doyle et.al. 2010). The mismatch between students’ upbringing, academic preparation, and the culture of academic excellence in the UK is troubling for those who could not manage to bridge this gap (Sowden, 2003). In contrast, students with prior familiarity and exposure to a style of academic learning similar to that of the UK achieve good grades with a smooth academic transition, as they are able to match the requirements of the academic culture of the destination university (Peacock and Harrison, 2009). Bourdieu has understood this as an ‘arbitrary culture’, which imposes its cultural schemes to reward elite tastes and cultural knowledge (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Sullivan, 2002; Nash, 1990).

This specific culture is central to assessment and exams, thus students are required to demonstrate particular personal abilities and skills to achieve success. This is not possible for all international students as they come from diverse background and carry a distinct and varying bundle of capitals. They also have a different personal strategy to face the challenge and acquire the skills that help in achieving success (Ashikaga, 2010; Richardson et.al. 2012).

British education is already competitive and well known for its academic excellence, requiring its student population to achieve with distinction. It is what drives its exclusive nature and excellence and essentially, what attracts students from abroad; but in doing so, it disadvantages those who lack capacity or the necessary skills to get through a highly sophisticated learning process. This inequality exists not only between native English and international students but also within the international student group as they come from diverse backgrounds and carry different bundles of capitals. Given the heterogeneity of the international student body, it is highly unlikely that all students will fulfil these expectations and experiences. Moreover, the difference in educational attainment does not rely solely on the 'cultural arbitrary' of the university but also on the exclusionary roles of ethnicity, academic and linguistic competence and the social-cultural life of students within and outside the University (Canales, 2013; Harris and McNamara, 2002). The expectation to be an innovative and independent learner (Goode, 2007; Wang and Li, 2011), to demonstrate critical thinking, originality and honesty in the production of academic work is highly anticipated in British education (Bowker, 2012; Brown, 2007a; Le Ha, 2006; Wong, 2004). Regardless of the origin, ethnicity, beliefs, differences, and personal competencies of participants, this is a part of the expectations that British university places on its entire student body (Krahe et.al. 2005; Wang, 2010; Littlewood, 2000).

Our existing knowledge suggests a gradual adaptation of academic styles and cultural codes are required to achieve good grades while the process of adjustments and negotiation is discussed to identify coping strategies of international students' adaptation to overcome these challenges (Brown, 2007b; Gill, 2007). The majority of studies examining the experiences of Asian students about their adjustment, performance, and achievements in British higher education, normally acknowledge non-linear academic progress among students (Burnapp, 2006; Brown and Holloway, 2008). The adjustment process among these students revealed that the intensity and impact of problems students face tend to be non-linear; quite high at the beginning of their exposure to British education but gradually reducing over time depending on their investment of capitals and accumulation strategies.

In addition, problems of inclusion in the classroom and relationships with classmates and tutors (Bartram and Bailey, 2009; British Council, 2014; Brown, 2009), the effects of term-time work on education, isolation and loneliness (Sawir et.al. 2008); and stressful student life (Ashikaga, 2010) are all somehow related to the shortcomings in personal 'soft skills' and resources (e.g. strategic use of English) students use to manage their life in the destination university. Superficial knowledge, poor use of language and limited awareness of academic culture lead to the greater dependency of students on tutors and university departments for help and skills development, which in itself is an extra burden on students and seems to marginalise them in the classroom environment (McDonald, 2014).

The literature reveals a tension between international students expecting special attention from the education provider, including tutors and the university, and the university requiring students to increase their effort in producing quality work (Tian, 2008). In this struggle, the majority of international students seem to negotiate their expectations by accepting lower marks or grades compared to their native English counterparts (Sovic and Blythman, 2013). This is how the 'arbitrary culture of British university' disadvantages international students.

### 6.3- PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION AT THE UNIVERSITY

Participation is essential for learning and inclusion, and to enable students to explore university life and adjust to the British education system. The study found that active participation required a certain stock of capitals, for example, linguistic competence, to facilitate inclusion in the class and in university life. In this regard, the survey revealed that the majority of participants were found to be attending their classes and getting involved in university life in general. Interestingly, even those students who had been working during term-time were also positive about attending their classes. As a whole, the survey suggests that compared to students' involvement in classroom activities, the study cohort explored their university life<sup>17</sup> less actively although there was a positive relationship between involvement in university life and adjustment to not only the University but also to their life, generally, in the UK<sup>18</sup>. Those who were more fully involved in university life were

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<sup>17</sup> A total 38 (25.7%) participants were actively involved in university life compare to 55 (37.2%) who were limited in their way to such active involvements. 18 (12.2%) stated that they do not think that they participate in university life generally and are limited to class related aspects only (See Appendix G- Table 9 & 10).

<sup>18</sup> Adjustment to University (Chi-square value 20.687, df 4, p value=0.000) (See Appendix G- Table 5), and adjustment to the life in the UK (Chi-square value 17.185, df 4, p value= 0.002) (See Appendix G- Table 6).

more likely to adjust to the life at a university and in the UK. Also, survey results indicate that participants who were good at participating in both class and at the University were able to establish better relationships with tutors<sup>19</sup>. One participant reported a gradual process of adjustment, which runs alongside participation in class and university life:

“I am participating more now than I was. Before I could not understand that much, could not speak that much, but now I understand my subject very well so I'm doing well. In my first year I was lonely and quiet, and then I started exploring and now feel confident enough”  
-Pakistani Credentials (Case 47)

Interview and survey data suggest that participants who had prior exposure to international education faced fewer adjustment problems than those without prior knowledge or experience of life in the UK<sup>20</sup> although the different educational practices of learning and teaching caused short-term problems for many students regardless of their background. These problems often decreased as participants gradually adjusted to the British education system and life in the UK<sup>21</sup>. One Bhutanese participant clearly represents this scenario:

“regarding academic experiences, I was a bit disappointed in my first semester due to the teaching style, but in my second semester it was a drastic change, and I started to adjust to British education. However, there are some negative experiences, but mostly I had positive experiences.”

-Bhutanese Female Highflyer (Case 12)

Similarly, after spending three years doing undergraduate in the UK, one participant stated:

“At the beginning, I had difficulties regarding making progress in the class, due to entirely different educational exposure compared to India. The way of study in India and the UK is entirely different; then gradually, I started adjusting and now I am fine”  
-Indian Credentialist (Case 30)

The classroom activities, for example, group work, presentations and discussions, presented students with opportunities for inclusion, exchange and networking. However, participants had various reservations and priorities which also prevented them from engaging fully in the inclusion process, mainly due to cultural gaps and elements of youth culture. Also, class size and extremely busy schedules were some of the reasons given for students' interaction being limited to students sharing similar ethnicity and nationality. One Indian explained how the size of the learners' group could provide an encouraging environment in which students can embrace class experiences:

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<sup>19</sup> Chi-square for lecturers-(Chi-square value 34.046, df 4, p value= 0.000) (See Appendix G- Table 7).

<sup>20</sup> (Case studies-01,12,13, 20,26,30,34, 42, 44 and 46)

<sup>21</sup> Chi-square value 62.061, df 4, P value= 0.000) (See Appendix G- Table 8)

“We have a very small group in the class, so we are a very intimate group. We are only 12 in both modules. So we have a very close relationship, but out of college, I have very few students who know me”

-Indian Female Realist (Case 15)

In contrast, small class size negatively affects experiences too. One Indian (33) had no opportunity of collective learning. As he describes his frustration:

“I have only one classmate in the university. [Despite this] I know only people from south India, speaking Tamil. I do not like studying in the class [cause] He [classmate] said to me that you are going to fail and that demotivates me, so I do not like him. Sometimes I talk to tutors, and sometimes I am all alone. When I used to study in India, I'd never call my family, now when I feel lonely, I call them, and they said 'when you go abroad, you call us ya' [laugh]”

-Indian Struggler (Case 33)

Work pressure tended to lead participants to focus only on class related matters, thus skewing experiences around ethnically bounded social grouping in a multicultural class. One account represents the feeling of others unable to engage in true multicultural experiences:

“I usually receive emails regarding seminars, but we do not have much time left after our studies to participate in those other activities at the university. We have assignments and coursework, so we are usually more on to complete that instead of going and visiting other activities. That is what we are here for”

-Pakistani Female Realist (Case 44)

Gender seems to play a role when female participants limit their social contacts to the University only. These participants, themselves, set their boundaries to prevent unwanted exchanges and thus, limit inclusion. As one participant pointed out:

"As long as friends are concerned, I do not have lots of friends. We have many white people who have gone into themselves. It is mixed sometimes. I also have classmates from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Libya and I am comfortable studying with them compared to my white counterparts. You feel a connection with them [Asian] may be... not scared to voice your opinion. You are also comfortable regarding using English, as they are also not as good as white people in English. I think, I might use incorrect English with English students, which pushes me down.”

-Pakistani Female Realist (Case 43)

In a similar case:

“regarding academic exercises, I do enjoy the company of other nationals, which is important. I do socialise with people, who do not harm my social image.”

-Sri Lankan Female Realist (Case 49)

There is also evidence of a lack of support for the inclusion of international students into the university environment. This can make participants feel left out:



“Extracurricular activities at my university are for UG students, for masters like us, I do not see much. I do not participate much in activities like sports. I was part of a psychological service. Apart from this, I did not take part in any other activities.”

-Bhutanese Female Highflyer (Case 12)

The possibility of accumulating social capital has been limited to ethnic boundaries and encounters in the classroom where students gave priority to accumulating cultural capital rather than social capital. Regarding attending mandatory classes, there is promising evidence to suggest that participants were keen to appear credible in classes and had positive attitudes towards their participation overall. However, barriers to inclusion and personal preferences seem to have affected students' multicultural experiences. The social capital has been found most affected in the life of participants, despite its crucial role in the inclusion and the adjustment process of students both in the class and in university. Also, the majority of the study cohort prioritized cultural capital over other forms of capital in attempting to achieve academic success. This could be seen in trajectories which are explained in chapter 4.

#### 6.4- ACCESS TO ACADEMIC HELP AND RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CLASS

Since academic achievements were at the centre of students' motivations, the need to have better relationships with tutors and classmates is considered important in the class. Given the diversity in the student population, many students emerged with the urgent need to access academic help to succeed. Their expectations of getting help from academic staff vary across the sample. However, expectations of being looked after are not polarized but are rather mixed. Participants in general had received enough attention from academic staff although some reported disappointment with tutors and many had mixed feelings about access to academic help and their relationships within the class environment. The students' relationship with their tutors is considered the single most important way in which they feel they can achieve inclusion, adjust to western academic life, and meet the demands of British education. Positive relationships, whether with classmates or teachers, seem to impact on student life, both within the University and beyond. Compared to their relationships with peers in their classes, the study cohort had particular intentions to create close and positive connections with their teachers, who were perceived to be the students' only source of academic assistance. Regarding classmates, participants reported limited opportunities to get involved with them and, to some extent, some participants (Pakistani female Realist 43, Pakistani Highflyer 46, Sri Lankan Realist 49) intentionally avoided classmates to protect their cultural preferences. In general, despite having a sense of the

positive impact of inclusion in their class, participants do not necessarily seek to involve themselves with ethnic groups other than their own. However, they do expect a lot from teachers in terms of both, academic performance<sup>22</sup> and assisting their involvement in the classroom environment<sup>23</sup>. Regardless of the background and previous achievements of participants, the tutor-student interaction was considered a major factor and fundamental relationship in shaping the entire education process. Evidence suggests that the successful transferability of western education is dependent on teachers and, to some extent, participants and that in this process, there is a need for students to have a positive relationship with their tutors, mainly in relation to getting help in academically challenging situations such as writing assignments, as well as in supervisions and day to day classroom interactions. One Highflyer explains how the relationship works:

“Academic culture is very nice here. The professors are helpful. If they give you an assignment, then you will get support [from them] as well. One of my friends was working on Indian Airlines; he had difficulty in receiving data from our countries. Airlines did not want to expose themselves, but he got that data with the help of the university. Here professors will give the task and guide you through the process. I am getting a distinction over here. I am doing well...coming from a developing country, you are not expecting a lot, but you do get a lot over here.”

-Pakistani Highflyer (Case 46)

Apart from academic help and support, teachers also encourage and stimulate inclusion of the international community in their classes. As one participant stated:

“My tutors are very helpful, and whenever I have problems, they are always there to help me. It is from my side that I have not explored much...academically, at various levels, I found a difference e.g. tutors are much more organised here; they know what to put into your lectures. Also, in contrast to India, we have to participate in [class] activities here. Tutors encourage us to introduce our thoughts within the class and express ourselves. That is nice for me. I am learning lots of things from other students too”

-Indian Female Realist (Case 15)

In contrast, participants with problematic transitions through the British education system had particular issues, which related to tutor-student interaction and the level of support that

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<sup>22</sup> The survey suggests that there is a positive relationship between tutor-student interaction and participants' classroom performance. The participants with better relationships with a tutor performed significantly better than those who had problematic relationships. (Chi-square value 24.380, df 4, p value=0.000) (See Appendix G- Table 11) They were also able to perform better academically as a whole-(Chi-square value 39.640, df 8, p value=0.000) (See Appendix G- Table 12).

<sup>23</sup> In terms of participants inclusion in University life, tutor-student interaction has been significantly related to better integration. Participants who had the better relationship with tutors were found to be more involved in the wider university life. (Chi-square value 34.046, df 4, p value=0.000) (See Appendix G- Table 7).

they received<sup>24</sup>. One Afghani case represents the ambiguity in assessment and limited academic help by the tutor:

"There is a huge difference between education in South Asia and the UK. Studying here is very challenging. We are not familiar with the education system here, so we need help for academic stuff, which is only possible if we get attention from tutors and I find it poor at my University. Teachers do not care what grades you receive, and there are no single criteria for assessment. Some focus on grammar while others on logic, contents and ways of expressions of ideas. What I have been expecting from British University has not met yet. I have spent all my savings, though I am getting pass grades. I do not have proper guidance on how to write and develop assignments. I lost my sleep during writing assignments, and if you do not know how to write it, your pulses rise. For the dissertation, if you fall into the wrong hands, you are lost forever and end up with poor results."

-Afghani Realist (Case 01)

These cases are limited, but representative of occasional problematic access to academic help among some international students, particularly within the classroom. In general, the experiences that students have of tutor-student interaction were mixed, individually perceived and might be both positive and negative. One Pakistani Realist described the relationship dynamics in her practical daily life. She believed in British education, but had a particular experience that dampened her mainly positive experience, although this did not mean her transition was entirely negative:

"I have mixed experiences as a research student. We have seminars, induction [to guide us] how to do research and use methodology and that is it. It is now our responsibility to conduct research and produce results. At the PhD level, it is fine. Because when you explore yourself, you learn more and I like this way of learning. My supervisors are [generally] helpful. Whenever I need their help, I get it sometimes, but not all the time. Sometimes, they become rude as well. I think the supervisor should be a bit more helpful. We have very formal relationships with supervisors, unlike Pakistan or India. [However] I like the freedom to research. Supervisors show us the path, and we have to march on that in our own ways"

-Pakistani Female Realist (Case 42)

The role of teachers and their use of assistive techniques in the classroom seem to be central to facilitating group work, successfully delivering lectures, increasing the

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<sup>24</sup> The tutor-student interaction also raised concerns over relationships with tutors. Participants, who were able to access tutors better than their counterparts, had fewer concerns about their relationships with tutors. In contrast, those who had problematic experiences had concern over such relationships. (Chi-square value 27.345, df 8, p value=0.001) (See Appendix G- Table 14).

Poor academic performance, e.g. failure, is also associated with the tutor - student interaction. The survey provides evidence that participants with access to help from tutors were more likely to benefit from such help than those who could not establish such a connection (Chi-square value 22.767, df 8, p value=0.004) (See Appendix G- Table 15).

participation of students in learning and tasks, and even providing personalised advice on learning issues, ranging from particular academic tasks to long-term career plans. This, in particular, had a significant impact on participants' positive experiences in the classroom<sup>25</sup>. The general pattern of relationships between South Asian students and tutors is largely one of the positive relationships and are significantly related to the levels of satisfaction among participants in terms of the quality of their classroom environment<sup>26</sup>. Furthermore, having a good time in the classroom and a sense of making progress academically also influenced the overall lives of participants more generally<sup>27</sup>.

## 6.5- THE QUALITY OF BRITISH EDUCATION

Participants of this study conceive the quality of British education in purely academic terms, yet they also consider facilities, academic culture and resources available at the University in shaping their version of quality of education. In general, the quality of British education is individually constructed by students and participants perceived the qualities of their ongoing education differently. The criteria used to refer to the quality of British education were dominated by practical teaching styles and the functional nature of education, the current curriculum and the use of assistive technologies, student services including library and hospitality, material and academic support, the reputation of universities and multicultural campus life. These are all essential components of the quality of British education constructed by participants. The aspects of British universities that help students construct their sense of quality are presented in Figure 16.

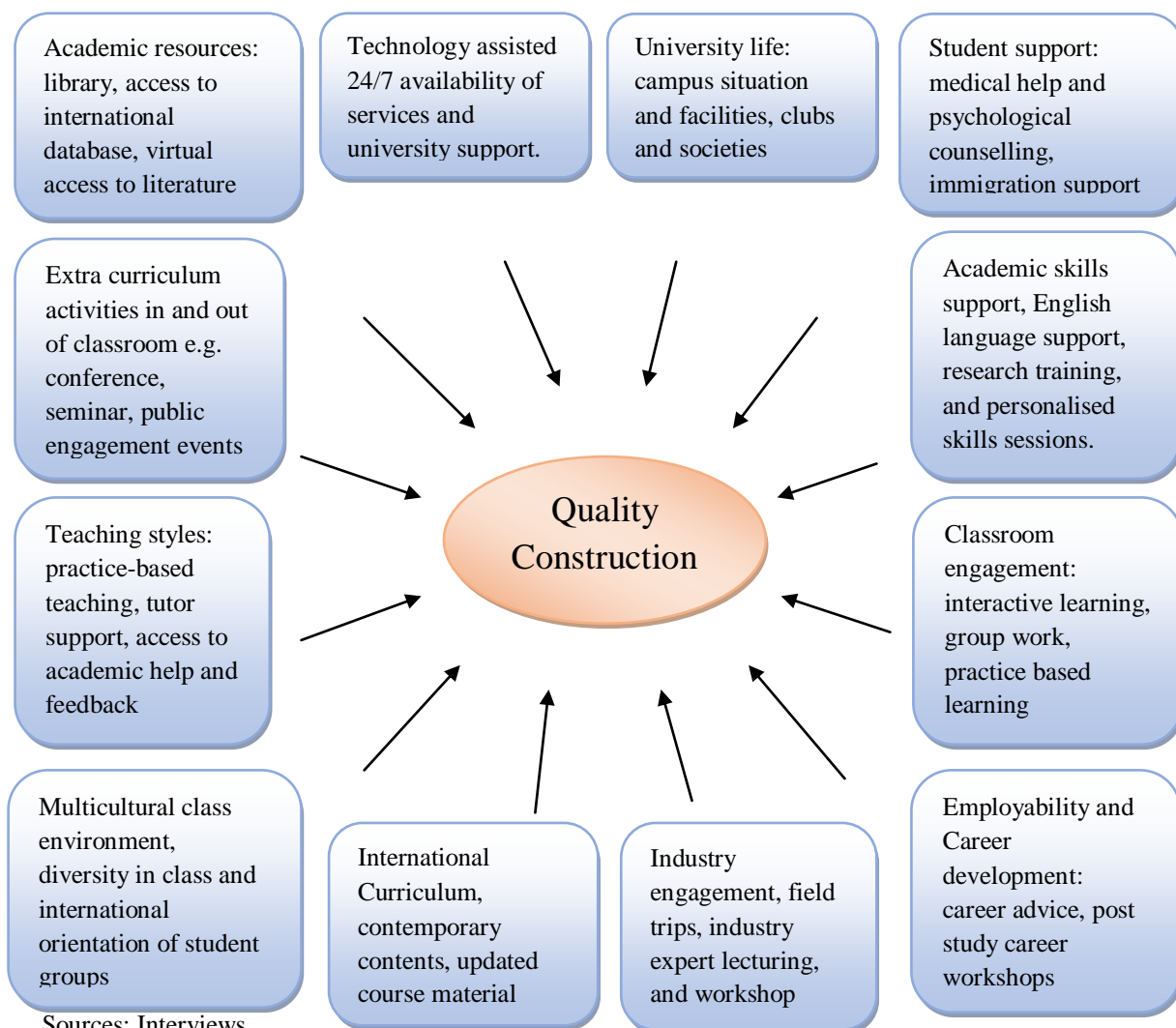
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<sup>25</sup> With regards to classroom activities, participants with better relationships with their tutor had fewer difficulties in joining groups than those who had problematic relations (Chi-square value 23.485, df 8, p value=0.003) (See Appendix G- Table 16). This is also true with regard to speaking in academic discussions in the class. (Chi-square value 27.963, df 8, p value=0.000) (See Appendix G- Table 17). The survey also suggests that participants in problematic relations with their tutor were struggling to get academic help compared to their counterpart who had such privileges (Chi-square value 23.486, df 8, p value=0.003) (See Appendix G- Table 18).

<sup>26</sup> The tutor-student interaction improves the level of satisfaction with the classroom environment. The constant support, consultation, practical guidance and advice on career options impacted on participants' experience and was significantly related to the interaction with tutors (Chi-square value 19.075, df 6, p value=0.004) (See Appendix G- Table 19).

<sup>27</sup> In terms of adjusting to life at the University and in the UK, participant-tutor interactions influenced the adjustment process. In this regard, academic settlement has been vitally important for which help from tutor played an important role and influenced the adjustment process positively. For University life (Chi-square value 23.138, df 4, p value=0.000) (See Appendix G- Table 20), for life in the UK (Chi-square value 31.806, df 4, p value=0.000) (See Appendix G- Table 21)

Figure 16-THE QUALITY CONSTRUCTION OF BRITISH EDUCATION



Sources: Interviews

One Bangladeshi realist (Case 03) pointed out:

“It [British education] will make you realistic and practical. It would make you forecast what you're gonna do and help you to put yourself in the right place.”

-Bangladeshi Realist (Case 04)

Practical learning and teaching style at a British university was widely recognised as contributing to employability, which then gives students positional advantages when seeking employment in the domestic labour market back home. As one participant acknowledges:

“In contrast to education back home, here education is more practical; you do not have to memorise stuff. It is more about,... they make you work hard. It is not like, take this spoon and take out jam. [Instead] they say, here is jam now you figure out how to take it out. I prefer this learning style [because] they present you [with] course work as a challenge and you start learning. Employers prefer a British degree to Pakistani or Indian or anywhere else because this is the best education in the world”

-Pakistani Credentialist (Case 47)

Similarly, participants consider traditional learning style of South Asian education as disadvantages thus appreciate the practical approach of British education. The majority of participants seek to distinguish both styles of learning and teaching with regards to labour market advantages and prefer western ways of learning rather than their own. One Indian female realist (Case 15) commented:

“It [British education] is more practical and realistic. Back in India, you study traditionally, where marks are everything. Even our parents have a mindset to expect us to get so and so percentage. [Thus] It is a very marks oriented education. In contrast here, obviously you care about marks, but it is not solely what you would care about. You need to look at the dynamics of the person and how much you are evolved with things, which I do not think people in India acknowledge. The method applied by UK universities is more productive.”

-Indian Female Realist (Case 15)

A similar feeling can be observed from this quotation:

“The practical aspects of the study e.g. work presentation, help [me] to improve myself and it all adds up in the end. I like the teaching they do here. They also help us explore more practically. Compared to the UK, the level of education is a bit strict in India, and the stuff they teach might be irrelevant sometimes. From my point of view, you learn something and implement that. If you cannot, what is the point of teaching it?”

-Indian Realist (Case 31)

This view is not limited to a particular country or sub-region but represents a common push factor for students escaping their national educational regime. In addition to the real-world approach to learning, institutional recognition, multicultural outlook and creative stimulation have also been viewed as advantages of undertaking a British education. Many participants have discovered these qualities in their academic life and view it as a progression from their previous academic experiences. A Bhutanese female Highflyer (13) states that, in comparison to her previous international education in India, the British education is excellent:

“I am doing an MBA; I was interested in an MBA with international business (which) means that we are talking about the global economy. Here [the UK] is where people research... compared to India, I have seen people from almost all around the world. Different people have different views [to learn from]. This is a part of education.”

-Bhutanese Female Highflyer (Case 13)

The survey suggests that teaching excellence and support have been the most important factors in influencing participants' perceptions and experiences of studying in the UK.

“Content-wise and practically, my courses are excellent. Besides theories, they focus on practical aspects of the studies. The course is very well structured and strong. As far as my subject is concerned, I think my university prepares students for the future labour market by introducing current modules, which have all the required skills, training, e.g. how to improve your skills or dealing with patents, so they have a soft skills development program to take advantage of”

-Bhutanese Female Highflyer (Case 12)

In another example:

“Yes, they [teachers] are really good. UEL has the best research-based health and bioscience lecturer. If you see their portfolio, they come from the best place in the world, e.g. Cambridge, UCL, Imperial College, but they choose UEL because it has good research prospects. They teach me, and I am proud of it.”

-Sri Lankan Female Realist (Case 49)

The multi cultural Dynamics of campuses and the opportunities to get involved in the global community has also been fascinating for many students. As one Highflyer puts it:

“Education is the best I ever had [which] I cannot compare to back home. It is an independent education system. I am interacting with diverse people from different countries and cultures. It gives new experiences. The main benefits would be the practicality of degree over here. You build the temperament to work everywhere. It is a multicultural experience in London I would say.”

-Pakistani Highflyer (Case 46)

Regarding developing employability skills through British education, one participant stated that:

"In India, most of the course work is theory based, which means based on the past, but here it is current. In a real job scenario, you may have some constraints causing the problem in efficiency at work, so you need to learn current knowledge. Back in India, people produce or reproduce similar knowledge, but the world is changing every day. British education is practically based, more employable and competitive in the labour market”

-Indian Credentialist (Case 28)

In contrast to the optimistic perceptions and students’ encounters with the bright side of British education, there is also evidence of problematic experiences. These cases are fewer and experiences are very personal. They cannot, therefore, represent the views of the entire study cohort.

“My feeling is that the MBA in the UK should be for two years. It is a two-year course, but they squeeze into one year, making it pressurised and congested. I thought it was only my problem as I am from Bangladesh, but it was a common problem in the class. Sometimes I just cry because in a day I would study 13-14 hours and could not finish my task”

-Bangladeshi Female Realist (Case 03)

Similarly, another participant stated:

“It has been a good experience. However, I had a better perception of how the education would have been. In Pakistan, it is a good standard of education. I did not have many issues of coping with education, unlike the UK. I believe the difference is only that, the UK system is more about critical thinking. They make you think instead of showing you direction to do things. They make you reflect on what you have done.”

-Pakistani Female Highflyer (Case 41)

Other participants, a Pakistani Highflyer (Case 45), an Indian female Highflyer (Case 14), and an Indian Realist (Case 32), admitted that they found education here to be much easier than their home. As they stated:

“It is (education) fine. It is like A level, which I have done before, that is why it is very easy for me compared to the Pakistani education system. I am comfortable with this system”

-Pakistani Highflyer (Case 45)

Furthermore, an Indian Credentialist and Realist (Cases 29, 32 respectively), who had been to elite schooling, even stated that the Indian education system is of a higher quality than British education. For example:

“The difference between education in Britain and India is enormous. What I am studying here I had studied back home three years ago in my secondary level. So apart from using advanced technology and practical aspects of studies in Britain, Indian education is much better than here. I feel lucky that I do not have to suffer much stress to clear my exams here. Regarding quality I prefer India, but regarding exams, I escaped those days of hard work and pain”

-Indian Realist (Case 32)

Also:

“Since I had good schooling, I can say that, despite the reputation of British education, from my point of view the quality of education is very low. What we are learning, I have already studied in secondary school, so the educational level is not that high”

-Indian Credentialist (Case 29)

The experiences of these few participants cannot be overlooked, but the most commonly shared view of British education was that it is world renowned, highly valued and provides high-quality educational practice at the university level. The variations in experiences are natural due to personal circumstances, but there is not enough evidence to reject the collective opinion of participants as having better experiences in British education that would yield fruitful outcomes.



## 6.6- UNIVERSITY SUPPORT: AWARENESS, ACCESS AND USE

Participants usually prefer to get involved in a class-based environment than that of the wider University. Therefore, the majority of participants were less aware of support systems and other services at the university they might access and benefit from. In general, participants were concerned with services directly related to their academic and personal need e.g. library, part-time employment and accommodation services. Thus, many available services go unnoticed. This is an indication of a general lack of interest in wider university life as well as a lack of urgent need for them. Outside the classroom, international students require support and access to information that can help them to settle in British life. Almost all universities sampled have established a range of services and support systems to meet the expectations of both local and international students and there is a variety of services that universities offer to help South Asian students. However, very few participants acknowledged the role of university services in their academic life. Participants commonly refer to services such as libraries, employment and accommodation offices while only a few individuals have had direct involvement with other services. Libraries were the most cited services that had a positive impact on participants' experiences<sup>28</sup>. One Pakistani Highflyer described his experiences these words:

“For me, I would say it (library service) is more than that I got back home. I am very happy, and I always come to my University at night to learn, but in Pakistan, you cannot study at night. It is like university providing many facilities and resources to us. They [staff] listen to students, but back in Pakistan, they will not hear. Here, any issue related to course content or academic subject can be discussed with university departments. The library is doing exceptionally well. Canteen is also good; I am from a Muslim background, so they offered Halal food over here. It is really helpful.”

-Pakistani Highflyer (Case 46)

In a similar case, one participant doing a PhD explained the material support that they had access to while expressing their increasing expectation for the university to provide them with personalised assistance:

“We have a research room and personal study space with facilities e.g. printing. We have enough resources to conduct research. The library is big, and we have access to the database so that I can search in my own way. Compared to Pakistan we have robust datasets and software to work with. SPSS, STATA, EXCEL E-views. We

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<sup>28</sup> The use of the library has been found significantly related to academic performance of participants. (Chi-square value 30.457, df 12, 0.002) (See Appendix G- Table 22) as well as participation in the class (Chi-square value 10.777, df 3, 0.013) (See Appendix G- Table 23). Meaning that participants who were attending class activities regularly and achieving well were using library extensively, thus the service might have enabled them to make use of library services in order to excel in the class.

had training available for STATA only, and if you wish to get more information, you can access the relevant person to talk to. Interlibrary book loan and other facilities are also good at the University”

-Pakistani Female Realist (Case 42)

Some individual experiences are worthy of special attention. These incidences do not represent a collective view but indicate the growing expectations of students who seek attention and help. One Bhutanese participant had a negative experience with the accommodation service:

“To be frank, I do not use university services. In the beginning, I visited University service to get help finding accommodation, a part-time job and to prepare my CV and so on. Occasionally the international office. The accommodation office was not helpful. That was my worst experience since we are coming from far away and expect to get help, but did not receive it”

-Bhutanese Female Highflyer (Case 12)

The inadequacy of employment services was a major source of frustration for some participants. This particular service has been criticised most in terms of its usefulness. Despite these negative experiences, participants had many expectations from this service. For example:

"The employment services at University are not good. They did not help us get a job. There is no opportunity [of employment] for us. They asked us to prepare a CV and tell to send for to be cross checked, but we never got a reply from them. I will not go to see them again"

-Indian Credentialist (Case 29)

Other participants pointed out minor issues but were expecting some problems with the services available at their university. Two Indian Credentialists (Case 18 and 19) reported the lack of availability of free drinking water in their university premises while a Bangladeshi Credentialist (Case 05) complained about their poorly resourced library. Participants also criticised discrimination in the provision of free books by the university on security and health support. These personal experiences provide evidence of some problematic access and use of university services, but cannot be generalised to the entire study cohort. Despite the disappointment with employment and other services, library services were widely used and utilised. Undoubtedly, University services are created to help students to overcome challenges during their education. The lack of awareness and limited use of these services suggests that participants either do not require these services or simply do not recognise their usefulness in improving their experience. It is worth noting here that University services formally are equally available to all students regardless of their origin, ethnicity or nationality.

## 6.7- ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND DISTINCTION

This study looked at the performance of the study cohort to understand their level of achievement and some of the factors that affected their performances at British universities. It turns out that participants perform differently at different stages of their education in the UK. Performance, for instance, seems to be affected by cross-cultural factors, by adjustment issues at the beginning, and then gradually improves along with the adjustment process. Therefore, it is difficult to judge participants' academic performance; however, it was found that performance in the classroom is heavily influenced by academic preparedness, possession of, and access to resources, both material and intellectual. There is a major gap in performance between those who either had the best education back home, had prior exposure to international education and those who have been exposed to western education for the first time in their lives.

Again, there is no scale which can differentiate the performance of participants from one another; yet their very individual experiences are a true reflection of the progress they were making in multicultural classes. On the one hand, this study provides evidence of participants who enjoyed academic progress in a dynamic classroom environment while, on the other hand, some participants suffered from failure and stress due to disappointing performances<sup>29</sup>. Performances varied at an individual level and thus should be understood in their context. To have a sense of this, I compare the following two extreme cases:

"I believe that what I have learned so far, I learned by myself instead of learning more from class. If I do not go to class, I think I can do well. It is more like self-learning."

-Pakistani Female Highflyer (Case 41)

In contrast:

"I am an average student and was very stressed about performance at my University. I got three times [exam] resit. One was with plagiarism, the second and third due to a very bad mark; I do not know why. They gave me feedback saying that I could not manage university expectations"

-Indian Struggler (Case 21)

Apart from these extreme contrasts, the majority of the participants made progress towards success with or without significant problems. In the gradual development of academic

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<sup>29</sup> A total of 35.1% (52/120) of participants perceived themselves as 'average students', while 25% (37/120) considered themselves 'more than average' performers in the class. Towards the extreme, only 10.1% (15/120) suggested that they were doing 'exceptionally well' while only 7.4% (11/120) accepted that they are 'underachievers' (total responses-120/148). In addition, 8.8% (13/111) admitted that they were performing better than their counterparts in the class while 29.7% (44/111) were thinking it is partially true and 36.5% (54/111) found that despite their individual performance, they were not doing as well as their counterparts (total responses- 111/148).

performance, the whole university environment has had a significant impact. As one participant rightly pointed out:

“Regarding studies, I am still adjusting in the class, what my performance is, I cannot interpret in any way, but this is my first semester, and I am still learning. I am participating in my way. I am not a brilliant student, but I consider myself an average student”

-Indian Female Realist (Case 15)

When it comes to factors, which influence the academic performance of participants the survey results suggest that the use of English in academic situations, financial concerns and family problems are the factors that have most influenced students. Better relationships with tutors<sup>30</sup> and classmates<sup>31</sup> also had a positive impact on students’ performances. Furthermore, students’ ability to adjust both to University<sup>32</sup> life and life in the UK<sup>33</sup> was also positively related to the performance. We can see a clear distinction among participants’ performances - not all participants are achieving well in a British university. Academic preparedness (e.g. Cases-34, 41, 45, 46), possession and access to material resources (e.g. Cases- 14, 26, 28, 31, 32) are the influences that help to create such distinctions among participants.

## 6.8- LEARNING CHALLENGES AND INFLUENCES OVER EXPERIENCES

So far, the process through which participants have progressed has not been a linear one for the majority of participants, with a small number of exceptions (Pakistani Highflyer Cases 41, 45 and 46; Indian Highflyer 26). The difficulties that participants have faced largely relate to difficult transitions in making academic progress in the classroom, student fees and the cost of living in the UK, finding term-time work, and balancing work with study. Apart from these difficulties, negative influences beyond the university environment that caused trouble for some participants. Many of the academic problems stemmed from the differences between education at home and in the UK. Case studies (01, 03, 20, 21, 22, 25, and 33) particularly represent difficult academic progress in adapting to the British education system. Similarly, western ways of producing coursework have been a source of stress to participants, regardless of the level of study or how well they were prepared to

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<sup>30</sup> Individual performance (Chi-square value 39.640, df8, P value 0.000) (See Appendix G- Table 24), comparative performance (Chi-square value 24.380, df 4, P-value 0.000) (See Appendix G- Table 25)

<sup>31</sup> Individual performance (Chi-square value 33.732, df 8, P-value 0.000) (See Appendix G- Table 26), comparative performance (Chi-square value 18.553, df 4, P-value 0.001) (See Appendix G- Table 29)

<sup>32</sup> comparative performance (Chi-square value 26.398, df 4, P-value 0.000) (See Appendix G- Table 27)

<sup>33</sup> comparative performance (Chi-square value 21.474, df 4, P-value 0.000) (See Appendix G- Table 28)

undertake a British education. Comparing these two accounts from participants with different skill sets demonstrates the scale of the academic gap between east and west:

- 1- “I understand what people say in class, but I cannot reply quickly; that is my problem. I am having trouble preparing a dissertation. Some of my friends help me to buy course work cause I did not know how to prepare assignments and projects. People do not help us to make an assignment or to do a project”

-Indian Struggler (Case 33)

- 2- “The only difficulty I had was assignments. Since English was not my first language, I found it bit challenging compared to Bhutan or India, where we have very straightforward examination process while here they expect us to analyse and explore that in many aspects.”

-Bhutanese Female Highflyer (Case 12)

After academic difficulties, finance and managing money to fund the costs of studying and living abroad was a major cause of concern. Families and part-time employment in the UK have been major sources of funding for most students. A very small number of students received educational loans and scholarships<sup>34</sup>. Those participants who were being funded by their middle-class families were often concerned about money and hoped to support their living by doing part-time work in the UK. This raises another potential concern, which relates to work-study balance. The two Indian cases (21, 25) were entirely independent on funding and were working more than the legal limit, while the Bangladeshi case (06) was terribly affected by finance. According to him:

“What I did to fund my studies was that I took a loan from the Bangladeshi people in London and relatives, on interest, and I paid back when I earn money from a job.”

-Bangladeshi Struggler (Case 06)

I will be discussing the need to work and the likely impact it has had on participants' experiences in the next, however, I want to introduce work briefly, as a source of trouble, in as much as participants wished to work not only in order to earn money but also to extend their opportunities to gain work experience in the British labour market. Participants were struggling to access part-time work and those who had secured a job were having mixed experiences. Different participants viewed work in the UK very differently. This statement represents the dilemma of participants with work commitments:

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<sup>34</sup> Bangladeshi Realists case 03 (Govt. of Bangladesh) case 07 and case 09 (both University funded); Bhutanese Highflyer case 13 (Govt of Bhutan), Indian Highflyer case 14 (University funded); Pakistani Highflyer case 41 from University, case 46 from Govt. of Pakistan

“I did not find London an attractive place and am still struggling to manage my life here. I have three days university and three days work. One day I come to the library. It is difficult if you work; when you work, you lose so much.”

-Afghani Realist (Case 01)

The impact of part-time work on students' studies and social lives was found to be very important. Participants who had work commitments were affected significantly by the difficulties they were having<sup>35</sup> and survey evidence suggests this had a major impact on their performance in comparison to their counterparts in the classroom who did not work<sup>36</sup>. Participants who were taking part actively in university life found that they had fewer difficulties than those who had more limited involvement in university life<sup>37</sup>. A similar trend also exists in relationships with tutors and the impact of the difficulties. Those students who had a better relationship with their tutor experienced significantly less negative impact on their studies and life<sup>38</sup>.

## 6.9- SATISFACTION AT UNIVERSITY

Unlike previous studies, the study cohort's satisfaction from the experience of studying at a British university has been unprecedented. Despite the occasional contrasting experiences, students' satisfaction with their experiences at university was surprisingly positive and contrast to the findings of other studies which suggest study abroad a stressful and difficult transition. Disregarding the non-linear academic progress of some participants, overall students were happy with their experiences. Of course, the level of satisfaction varied individually, but for the most part, participants were satisfied with their experiences. Survey results suggest that, apart from the expensive fee structure, participants were largely satisfied, especially regarding the quality of lectures and the classroom environment, the content of the course, its relevance to career prospects and overall satisfaction with the University. Despite the difficult transitions of many participants and the problems discussed earlier, it seems that to have had little impact on levels of satisfaction. The study cohort, in general, appears to be satisfied with the overall experiences of studying at a British university. This favourable perception derived from participants' belief and trust in the fruitful outcomes of their qualification, which they valued most, and when analysed closely, this is the biggest concern among those who were worried about their problematic academic transitions. As one Nepali (Case 40) stated:

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<sup>35</sup> Chi-square value 10.049, df 1, P-value 0.002 (See Appendix G- Table 30)

<sup>36</sup> Chi-square value 13.554, df 2, P-value 0.001 (See Appendix G- Table 31)

<sup>37</sup> Chi-square value 10.838, df 2, P-value 0.004 (See Appendix G- Table 32)

<sup>38</sup> Chi-square value 9.332, df 2, P-value 0.009 (See Appendix G- Table 33).

“I am satisfied regarding skill and knowledge. I am still in the beginning. I think that I should go into research. I am a good academic [student], but regarding practical skill, I lack many things, but overall I am satisfied.”

-Nepali Credentialist (Case 40)

In many cases, participants were ready to recommend a British education, though they expressed concerns to help future students avoid the hardships associated with student life in the UK. Despite these hardships, most, if not all, students ‘still feel satisfied’ with the experiences they were having.

“I would recommend my friends that if you get admission into a very good university in London only then take a chance to come to Britain, otherwise if you are looking at a low ranking or average university to study then you should not come here. Do not spend your money”

-Pakistani Female Realist (Case 43)

Similarly, financial capacity is a key factor for many participants; for example:

“Yes, and I will recommend my friends to come here and gain better experiences, but only to those who can afford to study in the UK. Students with a weak financial background should not come until they have the capacity to work alongside their studies”

-Indian Credentialist (Case 19)

Discovering a general trend among the study cohort, suggesting overall satisfaction, has been a significant finding. This trend indicates, in particular, an optimistic perception of the outcomes of study abroad experiences. The majority of participants seem to accept the benefits of British education in facilitating their future career trajectories. In doing so, they trust British education as a vehicle to drive them towards success. The sense of progressing through British education, which is one of the best educations in the world and carries many advantages to become successful.

## 6.10- CONCLUSION

Overall, university experiences were a mix of difficulties in adjustment to the demand of British education, a sense of gradual progress and dependency on classroom environment and tutors for help. In general, the educational experiences of study participants in a British university seem to replicate the findings of previous studies discussed in 6.2, which suggest educational progress of international students in the UK as a gradual process of adjustment and non-linear adoption of the academic culture of British education. Participants also expressed concerns and difficulties in this process, including squeezing student life in with study pressure, troubling relationships with classmates and tutors and,

in some cases, isolation, and psychological stress. The biggest worry came from the challenge to produce academic work, understand and reflect upon academic demands of the universities and prepare assignments for which the help they receive differed individually.

Class participation derived from participants' personal drive to improve their learning (Little and Arthur, 2010; Nomnian, 2008). Compared to the benefits of active participation in the class based network and activities, participants do not seem to engage in wider University life as in their perception it does not contribute to their immediate performance to achieve good grades (Schweisfurth & Gu, 2009; Waters and Leung, 2013). Unlike male participants, cultural differences and family expectations led female participants to avoid engagement in clubbing and drinking culture. Also, similar to the findings of Brown (2009), ethnicity based peer cultures dominated participants' relationships with classmates; sharing ethnicity, language, or nationality, except in the case of a few participants -mainly the privileged- who were able to extend their network beyond this. A similar trend was found in the relationships with tutors, which were formally limited among the majority. Exceptionally, a small number of participants were stressed and traumatised due to the lack of academic support from tutors similar to the findings of Ashikaga (2010) and Brown (2007b). Also, the gap between the students' expectations of receiving the academic help they need to complete academic tasks and university demands gave rise to tensions affecting many participants. This seems to disadvantage participants with troublesome relations to tutors and limited class-based networks of support. Despite this, the majority of participants received good academic care and attention, which enabled them to progress well academically.

In general, participants considered the quality of British education and its impact on employability and positional advantage would benefit all participants in one way or another. A majority regarded British education as international due to its practical, operational nature and industry oriented curriculum. However, few expressed contrasting views and saw it as sub standard and undemanding academically. Again, this was a very personal experience influenced by individual background. Regarding quality, for a majority of participants with a special interest in doing well in academic assessments, the entire university life including its facilities, services, and multicultural campuses seemed to give satisfaction. This outshone any individual negative experiences at university. The satisfaction among the study cohort, despite their challenging transition to UK education, was of particular of significance as it indicates particular beliefs and trust in fruitful



educational outcomes. To make international students feel at home, a range of services has been set up by universities, however many services go unnoticed, as participants do not feel an urgent need to access them, other than those providing academic support and resources. This could be explained as resulting from the pressing need to focus on achieving well academically, where participants prioritise their time and resources in favour of educational performance and ignore other needs. Disregarding the general unawareness or reluctance to access many services, a majority of participants were satisfied with services available to them and particularly admired to the library similar to findings by Paswan and Ganesh (2008).

Given the heterogeneous nature of study cohort, it emerged from the data that differences based on family-based resources, previous educational mobility experiences and academic preparedness affected the intensity and desire to get help and access resources or guidance that can lead to successful outcomes. Similarly, privilege driven differences in the academic experiences of students could be associated with individual differences in academic performance. A majority of participants were achieving average results, except for a privileged few who were thriving in the class. In this respect, participants with prior international exposure and private, elite schooling had relatively fewer performance issues than those from a less privileged background as discussed by scholars (Xiang, 2005; Xu & Hampden-Thompson, 2012; Lebcir, Wells and Bond, 2008). Family background and the social class dynamics of students were major determinants affecting the performance of participants. However, performance should be viewed in terms of the problems and barriers to learning participants faced individually. The association between ongoing experiences and social, biographical process in educational attainment is significant in this study but has been rarely discussed previously. These differences could be seen in the unequal adjustment process, integration style, distinct level of performance and challenges faced in producing academic work and advancing academically. In all these aspects, a student with a privileged background seems to benefit more from the educational process compared to those who face shortcomings in access to the form of capital and social class privileges (Duanmu, Li & Chen, 2009; Morrison et.al. 2005). Considering this evidence, British education seems to exacerbate differences between the privileged and others by presenting new challenges and assessments to those unfamiliar with the western style of learning. Despite the difference, a unique perspective of students' perception has emerged that suggests a belief and trust in fruitful outcomes of British higher education is noticeable as suggested by Little & Arthur (2010).

Regardless of all the individual differences in the experiences of participants, the chapter is able to report one universal finding; satisfaction with the entire university experience, perhaps surprisingly, was reported by the whole cohort. Apart from the degree to which individual participants were happy with different aspects of their life at a British university, it was unexpected to see such a general agreement that the overall university experience was worthwhile (Little & Arthur, 2010). It is particularly significant when student visa and immigration has undergone tight scrutiny affecting access and the formal rights of overseas students coming to study in the UK. Exceptionally, some participants were satisfied even when they were not making good progress academically. One may wonder, what contributes to the perceptions of study participants in making them satisfied. Evidence from this study suggests that the perception of a quality of education, its global reputation and public perceptions, including those of employers, favouring British degrees, generates trust and belief among participants that their education in the UK would benefit them compared to that of their native education system, as suggested by scholars (Moreau & Leathwood, 2006; Huang, 2013; Li, 2013). Highflyers, for instance, were satisfied as they were thriving both academically and in wider university life, while Strugglers were satisfied by the hope that they will be able to bring about change in their life if they succeed educationally. Therefore, joining British education or the prospect of having a British degree brings with it a sense of achievement. It is possible to see this satisfaction in light of the study location, the material richness of the campus and the apparent employability benefits of a British education. These benefits are perceived with a particular sense that they enable students to develop a competitive edge in the labour market back home.

#### 6.11- CONTRIBUTION

The theoretical contribution of this study has been to uncover the social process through which British education exacerbates differences between privileged participants and others who do not enjoy the possession of such privileges. The challenges presented by British education itself functions as a discriminatory funnel making it hard to progress for those unfamiliar with western style education. In explaining such discrimination, the chapter reveals the ‘arbitrary culture’ of British education exacerbating inequality among study cohort, making it hard for less privileged students to succeed. The difficulties in preparing academic work perceived academic help and performance related challenges have been part of the exclusionary nature of British education and tend to disadvantage those who possess different culture schemes than the academic culture of British universities. It has

been very difficult for students, other than Highfliers, to progress effortlessly in an academic setting. The challenges that students normally faced were mainly academic in nature, involving the use of language, preparation of assignments, study projects, and exam stress, and to overcome these challenges there is a need to access and have a good relationship with teachers as the authority to guide students through the education process. All academic work required appropriate knowledge of the field of study, the ability to think critically, common in the English language, and its academic, use to complete course requirements. Students with privileged background had fewer difficulties than those who come from a less privileged background and reported many difficulties in adjustments and performance in the class. Despite difficulties, almost all participants recognise and appreciate the quality and practical nature of British education, which is again associated with their hopes and expectations to secure advantages once they succeed in the education process. The overall satisfaction from the University experience is also part of their perception and expectations from British education. Disregarding variations in personal experiences on campus, an overwhelming majority of the study cohort believe, have faith, and trust in positive outcomes leading to positional advantages and social class benefits at the end of their study abroad journey.

This study contributes empirically, by providing evidence, which highlights the optimistic perceptions, trust, and beliefs of participants in the fruitful outcomes of their study abroad. This is the major source of satisfaction with British education. However, the satisfaction did not derive solely from achievements at university but also from the hope and positive perception of the quality and potential benefits, it would offer in securing advantages in the labour market. In doing so, the chapter contributes to the lacuna in which there is a limited understanding of how international students from South Asia achieve in British education and what their experiences are. Our knowledge regarding the academic experiences of students other than Indian has been extremely limited. The chapter adds details into the discussion by explaining the different learning styles and diverse experiences of the study cohort to suggest that study abroad has been a very personal journey and socio-biographical factors relating to students have largely shaped their learning curve and trajectories. In terms of socialisation, the study cohort remains an ethnically close group despite having been exposed to a multicultural classroom. Students' networks and friendship patterns within the classroom developed around ethnic proximity, nationality, and special interest e.g. a common academic task. Similarly, participants seek to engage in aspects of academic life than in wider university life, which indicates their extreme care in protecting academic achievements, except for those seeking added advantages by

combining study with term-time work. Female participants were culturally more sensitive than male counterparts when exploring western ways of university life and thus were more focused on achievements and career building. This attitude favoured more established forms of culture capital, embodying academic achievements and their accumulation with or without experiences of term-time work. Students' participation has been limited to achieving in academic tasks and this attitude largely ignored the benefits of taking part in a vibrant university life and other extracurricular activities, findings similar to those of Leung and Waters (2013).

The chapter contributes empirically to the understanding of specific needs and expectations in acquiring academic success and shows that the majority of participants did not seem to report the problems e.g. study stress, psychological health, and isolation at a university that has been witnessed by other scholars (Ashikaga, 2010; Bhattarai, 2009) discussed in section- 6.2. Exceptionally, only a few participants were concerned about their academic progress at the university. In contrast, the majority of study participants, reportedly, appeared satisfied regarding many aspects of university life including the quality and benefits of their education, regardless of the support they received. The overwhelming satisfaction with aspects of academic and university life was unexpectedly widespread among participants regardless of the difference in personal trajectories. This is equally applicable to almost all participants - Highfliers and Strugglers alike. This finding contrasts with the dominant view, which suggests student life in destination countries is becoming problematic and, in the worst cases, students feel very vulnerable, as Indian students in Australia and other Asian students in the UK have reported in the literature (e.g. Bass, 2006; Marginson et. al. 2010). This finding suggests the study cohort was legitimate and honest about their commitment to academic achievements. The functional isolation reported could be seen as students being extremely busy with their academic schedule and were conscious of the university support helping them feel included. Nonetheless, participants did not express a particular desire for much support. The perception of participants towards employability varied as many participants seek to add value to on going academic achievements. The challenges to learning were financial in nature, but some students were also aware of the added advantages gained from work experiences to improve chances of employability. The added complexities of attending university in London put additional pressure on those who face shortcoming in forms of capital, particularly among students from less privileged backgrounds. The effects of commitment to term-time work, in addition to ongoing academic hardship, contribute to unequal academic performance and this influenced student perceptions of (desirable) outcomes.

## CHAPTER 7 – EXPERIENCES OF TERM-TIME WORK

## 7.1- INTRODUCTION

The rise of student employment has drawn scholarly attention recently both, due to its scope for skills acquisition and for the opportunities, it offers, and because of the way it may influence academic progress and result in problematic students' experiences. By this area to examine the view of study cohort towards their new role as a student employee, This chapter focuses on the study cohort's views about their role as employees in the UK and, in doing so, seeks to explore a relatively untouched part of student life in study abroad. Much has been said about term time/work experiences of students at a national or local level but what it means to take part in the foreign labour market for South Asian international students is relatively unknown. To address this, the chapter examines the perceptions of the study cohort towards (not) taking part in the British labour market during their education and tries to make sense of their motives, experiences, and attitudes. In addition, it attempts to associate these attitudes with their social class attributes.

The chapter begins with a brief review of student employment in the literature to identify key empirical and theoretical questions relating to work engagement in study abroad experiences. In light of the review, perceptions of the study cohort towards (not) taking part in work during education are examined. In doing so, unlike other scholars, I do not distinguish between paid work undertaken during term time and in the vacations. Instead, employment is considered as a matter of choice that fits with students' narratives and family characteristics. The chapter then moves on to examine access and opportunities for 'soft skills' development at work by looking at the experiences of those who had a chance to work or were seriously intending to look for it. The satisfaction from work and its relative advantages are then examined together with the possibility of transferring these advantages to the local labour market back home.

The chapter concludes by presenting an alternative explanation of student employment by recognising the strategic response of working students to addressing a capital deficit that may have developed in transition and their efforts to accumulate capitals using work based skills and practical knowledge, which are expected or supposed to contribute to maintaining or achieve social class advantages.

## 7.2- STUDENT EMPLOYMENT: A REVIEW OF EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

Student employment, for both good and bad reasons, is seen in the literature, as becoming an inevitable part of student life. Going beyond traditional sites of investigation, scholars are turning to explore how students are undertaking many roles simultaneously combining paid work with ongoing study commitments (Raghuram, 2013; King and Raghuram, 2013). The academic discourse around student employment normally highlights the reasons why students tend to choose term-time work while studying full time. Also, the challenges relative to managing work with studies and the effects of term-time work on personal well being and academic attainment have been explored. The role of term-time work in widening social inequalities has been particularly examined. Despite variations in findings, there is a general agreement on how ‘student employment’ came into being. The majority of scholars associated the steady growth of student employment with a structural shift of responsibility to fund education from the state to the individual (Canny, 2002; Callender, 2008; Metcalf, 2003; Darmody and Smyth, 2008). In the process, as Moreau and Leathwood (2006) argues, state policies were reshaped to encourage neoliberal competitiveness in higher education and to permit state withdrawal of funding to HEIs in western nations, including the UK (Varghese, 2008). In response to the challenges of increasing interdependence between higher education and the labour market for enhanced competitiveness, HEIs started building a curriculum around market needs and placements as part of education promoting work, during studies (Hall, 2010). Moreover, the growth in the student body engaged in term time paid work is noticed beyond a particular age group, sex or nationality making it a global trend, which reflects the global influence, more generally, of neoliberalism and its pressure on HE and the labour market worldwide (Evans et al., 2014).

Why students choose to work part time while studying full time has been largely associated with financial difficulties in funding study and living cost. The reasons to choose term-time work also linked with family background and their social class membership to underline the role of term-time work in widening social inequality. The cost of attending university has risen and the gap between individual capacity to afford it and the combined the fee and cost of living making it hard to pursue education unless also making paid work a part of the journey. As a result, students (particularly from lower social classes) are moving towards term time employment to avoid student debt and failure in education or to achieve independence altogether. Findings suggest the problems in accessing sources of finance and family support, and the ongoing struggle to cope with the added responsibility to fund

education has been cited widely in the literature (Moreau and Leathwood, 2006). Some studies highlight lifestyle preferences among some students who work, independently, to fulfil them. Another frequently cited hypothesis suggests that students from certain parts of society, especially the working class, are more likely to become involved in term-time working due to social class barriers, which when it comes to academic outcomes; this contributes to perpetuating social inequality at large (Moreau and Leathwood, 2006). Humphrey (2006) argued that disadvantages appear in the form of lower grades and limited participation in university life, clubs, and societies, which tend to affect culture and social capital available via extracurricular activities and, consequently, access to and participation in higher education (Humphrey 2006). Callender (2008) suggests weak family support for education pushes students from lower class background to undertake paid work during term time to avoid mounting debt or failure to access higher education. Metcalf (2003) confirms this and associated family education history, culture and financial factors with the likelihood of taking paid work, which, in turn negatively affects performance and grades.

How student employment affects working students and their academic journey is occupying ever more space in the literature. Mixed results have been reported explaining both the positive and negative impact of term-time paid work; however, negative outcomes appear to outweigh the positive. The extent to which paid student employment is beneficial is open to question although evidence is growing rapidly. The common assumption in these findings has been that working students tend to develop attitudes and skills at work, which helps them, respond to tough competition in gaining access to and remaining in decent employment. On a positive note, many scholars have observed and suggested that there are advantages in combining work with studies due to opportunities available at work. These involve learning about work culture and organisations, developing ‘soft skills,’ including communication skills, gaining self-confidence, making useful contacts, and linking up with future work options while working temporarily. Developing transferable skills such as time management and the beneficial effects of a work placement on academic performance are also common in findings (Evans et al. 2014). McKechnie et al. (2010) discuss the potential educational value of work based skills attainment. By focusing on the type of activities students perform at work, it is suggested that students benefit from being engaged in a variety of roles within and between job categories. Consequently, a valuable range of soft and transferable skills can be harnessed that may help the person to secure future employment. It is important to recognise such sites of learning. (McKechnie et al., 2010; Broadbridge and Swanson, 2005). Curtis and Shani (2002) go even further and suggest



work experiences are as valuable as traditional lectures and the inclusion of such activities in classrooms, particularly in business studies, benefits students. Crawford and Wang (2014) confirm the positive effect of placements, over academic performance, among international students, and similarly, Helyer and Lee (2014) conclude that a positive internship can have a major impact on the future employability of working students. From a different perspective, Broadbridge and Swanson (2005) invite scholars to develop a theoretical framework to integrate findings of term-time work into a coherent model to guide and facilitate good use of work experiences.

In contrast, the scope and intensity of the negative effects of paid work have been central to some scholars who emphasise the detrimental effects of students' employment on their life and academic outcomes (Evans et al. 2014; Callender, 2008; Standing, 2011). For example, Munro (2011), Robbins (2010), and Nyland et al. (2009) describe the vulnerability of both local and international students in Australian education who have had to cope with the pressure and challenge of term-time paid work. These concerns have been raised due to the nature of work, and the pay and conditions in which students are increasingly engaged. Research shows that working students tend to accept work in the precarious sorts of employment normally available in the restaurant, bar and insecure work environments and are usually in low paid 'junk jobs' which are likely to demand more work just to earn enough to live on (Canny, 2002). Curtis and Shani, (2002) while recognising some positive effects also discuss the adverse impact of taking up paid work during studies that lead students to miss lectures, compromise on grades and engage in precarious jobs with no prospects (Curtis and Sahni, 2002).

There is also evidence of extended working practices among students who tend to allocate more hours to work than to studies (Triventi, 2014; Canny, 2002 and Nyland et al. 2009). It is suggested that western education has been designed to facilitate independent learning, which involves formal as well as self-study outside the university; this assumes that students are not engaged in anything other than education (Humphrey, 2006). Scholars have seen a growing trend of switching/ replacing time for study with paid work, by working extended hours, which ultimately affects both academic performance and students' well-being. While analysing hardship in student life scholars tend to address the conflicting roles of students e.g. worker and independent learners, together.

The ability and intentions to balance study with term-time work are thus questioned, in an attempt to explain variations in study outcomes. Hypotheses are then developed to test whether added responsibility of work might affect academic performance. In this regard,

Triventi (2014:11) analysed a complex set of the hypotheses (zero sum, reconciliation and selection to work) to understand the relationship between work intensity and its likely impact on academic performance and found a U-shape relationship in which the impact becomes adverse with the intensity of work engagement. Preference in time allocation has been the key to many of these hypotheses, among which it is argued that students who are spending comparatively more time on work achieve less than those who avoid such work. Also, the numbers of hours worked set against time spent on the study are taken into account to establish that moderate hours of work could be interpreted as beneficial, but may turn into a nightmare and affect aspects of student life and performance adversely, if intensified.

Despite the significance of the findings discussed above, results vary in many ways and even contradict them in certain areas, thus preventing us from drawing generalizable conclusions. There is a lack of agreement on the intention of taking up and effect of paid work on student life and the literature introduces a patchy picture of the relationship between term-time paid work and its relative outcomes (Broadbridge and Swanson, 2005). This is because of the common inclination to assume student body as a homogeneous group and overlook individual differences (Canny, 2002). This trend continues to undermine the heterogeneity of the student body based along lines of ethnic belongings; social-cultural diversities and nationality in particular, when considering student migration in the work-study nexus (Darmody and Smyth, 2008). Evidence in Australia, for example, portrayed working students as a vulnerable workforce disregarding their origins and level of studies (Nyland et al. 2009; Munro 2011, and Robbins, 2010) while studies in Europe, Ireland (Darmody and Smyth, 2008) and the UK (Canny, 2002) mainly refer to challenges related to work-study balance, its effects and the role of social class in the choices of students when they are considering term-time paid work. The findings discussed above thus suggest we consider the heterogeneity of the student body in which the choice of combining work with the study is largely associated and examine individual circumstances including students' class membership and family support. From this perspective, scholars seem to pay attention to personal narratives rather than group experiences. The underlining assumption of this approach has been to recognise the unique nature of student body by acknowledging social, cultural processes in developing diversity within the student population.

Adding another dimension to the debate, social class analysis of student employment extends understanding of the scope and role of term-time work to uncover how it

contributes to perpetuating social exclusion and inequality (Broadbridge and Swanson, 2005). Students from particular social groups e.g. working class are more likely to accept employment during their studies than students from wealthier families are. They also tend to favour more working hours, resulting in failure to achieve good grades and underperformance compared to their better-off counterparts. In contrast, Callender (2008) discussed the very different experiences of working class students with who do not go to work. The day-to-day struggle and negotiation of disadvantaged working poor students, who were unable to manage the study-work balance, limited their participation and led to social exclusion in education (Humphrey, 2006). In the long term, this resulted in poorer degrees and grades that then limit the possibility of securing a well-paid career, even if their course is completed successfully. As this vicious cycle continues, working class students end up unequally placed in the social hierarchy (Moreau and Leathwood, 2006; Humphrey, 2006; Metcalf, 2003). Arguably, the choices of students, to take up paid work while studying are shaped and informed by a combination of individual traits, their support system, and social class membership. To illustrate this Metcalf (2003), has found a strong link between parental education and participation in higher education and term-time work, which he argued is associated with class and income. In effect, access to higher education becomes difficult for students with less educated families and if someone has made it through, s/he is more likely to end up combining work with studies and thereby benefit less from education. As a result, class barriers in education disadvantage working class families and reproduce structural inequality and social segregation (Metcalf, 2003; Callender, 2008). Following above discussion, it would be misleading to put all students into the same category. Instead, it is necessary to emphasise the heterogeneity based on individual attributes, which influence decisions to take up paid work while studying.

In light of the literature, the key lesson to learn is to recognise that student employment is becoming an area of concern. Despite the benefits of taking part in the labour market while studying, the troublesome aspects of such experiences are dominating the debate. The problem arises when the choice of paid work becomes part of a vicious circle in which students from specific social backgrounds, with limited resources, are trapped and reluctantly take up paid work to continue in education. As a result, the whole purpose of social mobility through education fades away due to unsatisfactory academic outcomes or even failure. The entire discussion above is based on mixed findings from various locations and student groups, yet international students seem to be missing from this debate. Apart from the Australian case (Nyland et al., 2009), we have no idea how South Asian international students in the UK perceive 'student employment' and how taking up paid

work during studies might be affecting their experiences. The next section provides us with the opportunity to discuss their experiences in the context of with existing literature.

### 7.3- UNDERSTANDING THE NEED TO WORK

This study provides evidence that many participants are engaging in paid work while studying in the UK. The reasons to do so are complicated and overlapping, but primarily students work both to gain an advantage in the ever-congested labour market, by skills acquisition, and to support themselves by self-funding education and living expenses, fully or partially, to avoid debt accumulation, or to gain independence. Interestingly, there is no dominant pattern of student employment among participants. Instead, there are three major perceptions, which I called ‘views’ of participants, through which to acknowledge and examine their experiences at work in the UK. This study demonstrates that ‘student employment’, for many, is an opportunity to learn, to acquire ‘soft skills’ and to gain or remain competitive in the ever-congested labour market. Yet not everyone seeks to pursue such extracurricular sources of advantages, for many reasons. The underline question that distinguishes working students and the rest of the study cohort was, ‘Who wishes to work and, why?’

The study found that 71 out of 151 participants have worked at some point during their education in the UK and many of them have been working since their arrival. This is a considerable proportion of the study cohort; enough to suggest ‘paid employment’ during study has also become part of their life trajectories. This is a growing trend hardly discussed in the literature. Major studies show that many students justify their work engagement by providing rationales which contrast with findings which report that students working in labour market becoming vulnerable (Munro, 2011; Robbins, 2010; Bass, 2009 and Nyland et al., 2009). There is evidence that engaging in term-time employment has both positive and negative effects on many aspects of student life in the UK. Despite evidence of the harmful for their studies, some participants who worked believed that their term time employment helped them to learn practical skills that are useful in their chosen industry. In addition, those students who were employed did not report any negative impacts as a major side effect of their work, despite occasional incidents of racism and partiality.

The entire study cohort could be broken down into three separate groups representing their particular attitudes towards paid employment, its use and its likely effects during their education. I termed these groups; A- the privileged who ‘*do not want to work*’, B- a mix of

students seeking ‘*work with benefits*’ and C- underprivileged who ‘*have to work*’ to continue in education. For those who ‘*do not want to work*,’ either due to their privileged circumstances or their preference for academic benefits over the short-term benefits of work, term-time work was worth avoiding. In contrast, those who ‘*have to work*’ admitted having no choice due to their circumstance and their limited access to resources. Their dependence on paid work to continue studying was inevitable and inescapable. Between these two extremes, a significant portion of the study cohort, representing the ‘work with benefits’ view, perceived many benefits in paid work, both financial and non-material, when it is combined carefully with study commitment. Given the opportunities of living and studying in London, it is likely that a large number of students would prefer to make use of these opportunities and find the best fit, for their career development, between the practical field of learning at work and formal education. This could also provide them with a sense of independence and control in making their study abroad a success. The majority of working participants and those who were actively seeking work shared this view- ‘work with benefits’. The background of these participants was not quite as clear as we could see in other two groups, the privileged and underprivileged. This was rather a mixed group of people looking for benefits in work for many reasons. They had either been working or wished to work alongside their studies in the UK and perceived ‘term-time work’ as an opportunity to ‘learn as they earn’. Table 4 presents these views followed by a detailed account of the experiences these students were having in the UK.

Table 6- PATTERNS OF ATTITUDES TO TERM-TIME WORK

Purpose to work Participants' attributes	Currently working/ have worked		Looking for work	Not interested in work at all
	Financing living/ education	Skills, knowledge and competence		
Highfliers	12	34	-	13, 14, 26, 41, 45, 46
Realist	01, 04, 09	32, 42, 48	15, 27	03, 07, 31, 43, 44, 49
Credentialist	02, 05, 08, 16, 22, 47	10, 19, 35, 40	11, 18, 20, 23, 30, 36, 37, 38, 39, 50, 51	17, 24, 28, 29
Struggler	06, 21, 25, 33	-	-	-
Perceptions towards paid work	C	B		A

Source: Interviews

The immediate benefit of paid work has been financial more than any professed skill gain or improvement in personal traits, therefore, it is particularly attractive to the

underprivileged who already face monetary problems and are trying to avoid placing themselves or their families in debt. In contrast, given the costs of higher education in the UK, a strong financial background becomes a source of privilege, which made a difference in the choices and experiences of the study cohort. The financial strength of privileged students came from either family roots or scholarships, or both and discouraged these students from an additional source of funds via employment. These students, representing group A, seek no advantages through employment and do not want to put their studies at risks.

***A-I do not want to Work’:***

Participants with privileges such as full family support (Indian Highflier Case 26, Indian Credentialist and Realist Cases, 17 and 31 respectively) or scholarships (Bhutanese female Highflyer 13, Indian female Highflyer Case 14 and Pakistani Female Highflyers 41 and 46, Bangladeshi Realist Cases 03 and 07) did not seek to engage in term-time work. Their responses reflect their privileged access to resources, which meant that it was not necessary for them to work during their studies. A Bangladeshi female Realist 03, who complained about the lack of real industry exposure in her MBA, responded that:

“No, I am not working here. I got 14 lakh taka for my living and fees, similar to 33 thousand pounds. I have enough money to spend in the UK, so I do not bother to work here. I do not have any working experience in the UK job market. I have high work pressures from University, so I do not have time to work.”

-Bangladeshi Female Realist (Case 03)

Compared to the view of under privileged students, participants who seek academic achievements actively refused to become involved in term-time work. Despite the practical benefit of work exposure in the UK, their perceptions are grounded in the high aspirations of gaining advantages once they achieve well in the University. They also reflect the sense of responsibility, both towards their family and themselves, of achieving well in their education. One Sri Lankan female, Realist- 49, explains this sense of obligation to achieve well in education, rather than in work:

“This is my family who is supporting me for academic fees and living costs. I am not working to support myself. I do realise that I have some spare time to utilise, but I have seen people who are mixed up work with the university. I do have friends from different countries. They come to the university, tap in their attendance and slowly leave, but I did not come here to pay my parents money to do that. I need to make sure I get good grades because at the end of the day I have got no reason to tell my family that they did not do enough because they are supporting me well. It was not my aim anyway. I am fully committed to my studies,

but one day after my graduation I will work, but not at the moment during my studies.”

-Sri Lankan Female Realist (Case 49)

Sharing this view, participants also acknowledged the negative effects on studies, which financially comfortable participants did not want to expose themselves to:

“I do not work as work takes you away from studies. I want to study hard, get good grades and once you are in employment, then working hard and earn money. If you do not get good marks, then you affect your entire career and lose what you want to achieve and regret life. It is not because my family is capable enough to support me so I do not want to work. I know if I work I won't be able to get good grades.”

-Indian Credentialist (Case 28)

The participants with clear intentions not to engage in paid work along with their studies were influenced largely by their privileged backgrounds, which meant that they were able to access financial resources or secure funding from institutions. This, in turn, enabled them not to have to take on term time employment and reinforced their advantages by allowing them to devote full time, and focus on academic achievements as well as participation in a vibrant university life. Work during the study in the UK was thus seen as a barrier to success and worth avoiding while pursuing excellence in education.

#### **B- ‘*Work with Benefits*’:**

The advantages of study abroad could occur in many ways including in the form of distinction in grades or improved soft skills e.g. communication and transferable skills. Not all students have the same abilities or resources to progress evenly; some progress steadily while others have to explore how advantages can be accumulated or at least rescued from potential loss. A large proportion of the study cohort sought actively to combine the advantages of paid work both financially and personally, based on educational competitiveness at the University. Many participants act strategically to compensate for capitals that are lost or weakened in transition to UK higher education. This includes limited financial sources e.g. family and problematic recognition of skills and work experiences acquired in the home country, which become irrelevant to the current study program. Moreover, dramatic changes in the demand for soft skills, to get into work, play a vital role in influencing the decision of students to seek work based advantages for gaining a competitive edge over others in the labour market.

It seems that many participants with diverse background seek paid work along with study for advantages other than solely academic. Finance was one of the many benefits to be extracted from paid work, yet finance has not been perceived as the only purpose behind

their decision. Paid work is largely perceived as a mixed package of advantages to support costs of living and university fees, lifestyle preferences and, for some, a means of gaining personal independence. How to combine these additional sources of extracurricular advantages with academic commitments for maximum benefits has been a very personal strategy. The profile of participants choosing to work while studying, for combined benefits, does not show any financial emergencies such as those faced by underprivileged students; suggesting that work was a supportive source of finance rather than primary funding.

This perception represents the predominant dynamic advantages that a participant might gain if they were to engage in paid employment in the UK. Although making use of time outside classes by earning has been presented as a utilitarian act, students strongly believe in the potential to learn, as well as earn, from work. The motivations behind these perceptions largely revolve around the potential for information exchange and work-based knowledge creation. In addition, work-based opportunities for taking part in training, workshops and group work create a work culture that provides an alternative learning environment to those who seek real industry exposure. This perception assumes that employers prefer people with prior work experience, and provides them with a competitive edge over others who do not have prior work experience. In brief, participants with this view are convinced that paid work is a learning opportunity, which can add value to their existing skill set and provide them with dynamic advantages that cannot be judged in financial terms alone. As this Indian Highflyer-34, pointed out:

“I like working in the UK and currently working as a sales person. Life in London gives the opportunity to learn at work too. I have learned the importance of teamwork, how to deal with customers; how to socialise with people; work makes us realise the value of services which we lack back in our home. We learn good manners as well. By working here, I am happy that I am giving the least burden to my parents. Back in India, if you work friends and colleagues downgrade you and look down upon us, but here I have changed my attitude towards work. People respect when you work or if you are independent”

-Indian Highflyer (Case 34)

Participants, who had left employment for reasons related to their academic studies, continue to believe that work is a real source of practical knowledge that adds strength to their formal education and boosts their employability. One Indian Credentialist (Case 19) was not interested only in academic advantages but perceived a combined benefit from work and education, which was preferable. As he explains:



“One of the main reasons to choose work (is) because working experience will enhance our understanding of the labour market. You become familiar with practical aspects of the job market, and you may understand more specifically, what you are lacking in your skill level and can improve yourself before facing competition. The second reason was earning money to supplement living expenses in the UK. Later on, I realised that the course is intensifying day by day so thought I must give preference to study rather than a job and left that”

-Indian Credentialist (Case 19)

A Pakistani female Realist-42 expressed her view of real learning which usually takes place at work, which attracts people to take advantage of work opportunities:

“At the moment I do not work, but I have started to apply for teaching jobs. Before this, I used to work part time in supermarket Sainsbury, and KFC, which was not related to my field yet I learn so much from the job e.g. how to communicate, how to learn the culture over here. How to work with the team. They [team member] improve your confidence. It was a good experience and helped me to survive in London too”

-Pakistani Female Realist (Case 42)

Due to the perceived benefits of early exposure to work, it was inevitable that many participants wished to find a job. Nonetheless, the desire to work appeared to come with a personal intuition for successful transitions to independent living as a part of youth culture. An Indian female Realist (Case 15) demonstrated her desire to be independent and to offset the financial burden of her parents while another Indian Credentialist (Case 35) aimed to explore potential work experiences to benefit his family business, which he is going to lead and own in the future. As they explain:

“I am not working here, but I am looking for work because I am grown up and cannot ask my parents to pay my bills. Just to sustain my studies and my livelihood I need some money. They have already paid so much for me and I have another year to spend so until that time I will be asking money from them. I do not feel better to ask money from parents. They would never deny, but I do not want. London is very expensive”

-Indian Female Realist (Case 15)

The perception of the UK labour market is that it has been rewarding and competitive but full of opportunities to improve soft skills if one can secure a place. Keeping this in mind, selecting paid work during the study would be an informed judgment aiming to secure work based advantages highly relevant to future employment. Participants therefore, consciously were seeking or were engaged in work with a clear intention to accumulate extracurricular advantages at work, not just to generate money.

### ***C- Have to Work:***

This study identified a small number of participants from underprivileged backgrounds with particularly intense financial needs. In contrast to the participants discussed above, these people were preoccupied with the idea of having immediate and continued access to funds in the UK, due to mainly their personal and family economic difficulties. Paid work was perceived as the only tangible option to manage their immediate financial needs. The level of work commitment compared to their education was relatively higher than other participants. Their academic progress, therefore, was heavily influenced by their decision to undertake paid work during their studies. This was despite having an awareness of the potential negative impact of their long hours or taking part in the precarious types of work. Participants who shared this view have one thing in common: problematic access to economic resources and sources of support, both in their home countries and in the UK. These participants struggled at various points in time and found themselves exposed to paid work, in some cases, even before their proper adjustment to British education and life in London. For example, one Bangladeshi Struggler (Case 06), three Indian Strugglers (Cases 21, 25 and 33), two Bangladeshi Credentialists (Cases 05 and 08), one Indian Credentialist (Case 22), and one Nepali Credentialist (Case 40) are among those who perceived term-time work to be necessary, regardless of the consequences. A lack of funds pushed many (Cases 06, 08, 21, 40) to seek paid work in the first place:

“I work at burger king as a crew member because I have to pay my own fees, which are £7000. In this university, I am coming three days, so I cannot work, but other days I am working to support my studies. It is not good money, so I can pay my rent and fee. It is hard. What I did to fund my studies is that I took a loan from Bangladeshi people and relatives, on interest and I pay back when I earn money from the job”

-Bangladeshi Struggler (Case 06)

For some (Cases 05, 25 and 33), financial mismanagement led participants to seek paid work:

“I came here with £2000 initially, and I spent that money within 1 and half months here. So, I needed a good job, just for my all expenses. I do not like to bother my parents every month by asking for money as they have paid £10000 for fees, so I wanted to be independent and decided to go for work.”

-Bangladeshi Credentialist (Case 05)

Financial commitments also made the participants (Case 22) think about pursuing work alongside their studies:

“I can take money from my bank loan, but I am the one who will pay it back so if I work here no need to take money from there. I can make money to spend here. After my studies, if I work for one year I can earn money and I will pay back my education loan, and it is complete”

-Indian Credentialist (Case 22)

Based on this discussion, it seems that participants have not only considered work opportunities alongside studies as a means of earning money but also as providing them with a real advantage in facing the challenges in the labour market. General perceptions among participants, explored above, do not always necessarily present work as detrimental to students' experiences. Reasons, why working participants choose this path, are manifold and they complicate rational decision-making processes. The access to funds, family support and students' own judgment of securing advantages, either only at university or by extending it to the workplace, made a difference in segregating participants into groups representing the three distinct perceptions of paid work. Despite this segregation, paid work is seen as a potential solution to immediate or future financial problems in labour market. Therefore, the choice (not) to seek employment while studying became an important strategic step towards securing advantages. In this respect, social class privileges and material resources seem to make a difference in choices around student employment, suggesting an uneven selection of paid work.

#### 7.4- ACCESS, SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN AT WORK

The reality of paid work can contrast significantly with the perceptions discussed above. Access to decent employment, the nature and type of work and skills level at which students were working, along with benefits other than finance have been found more problematic than expected. Gaining employment has always been a difficult task for international students. It becomes even harder to access a suitable job in the increasingly competitive labour market due to few formal work rights for international students, for example, limits to working hours, skills mismatch and ethnic barriers. This was the case among many participants in the study who were actively seeking paid work or had worked at some point in their time in the UK. Access to paid work was reported to have become the biggest barrier, due to lack of information and support. The unavailability of jobs or difficulty in finding one was repeatedly expressed in interviews. For example, one participant who had been living in the UK for more than three years and had continued his studies at a PG level after completing an under graduate degree in the UK pointed out:

“I do not work anywhere due to the unavailability of jobs. I applied to the University, another supermarket. Without targeting a sector, I applied to many places, but could not find any. London is overcrowded, and people are not getting jobs.”

-Indian Credentialist (Case 30)

In response to difficulties in accessing term-time employment, participants who worked or wanted to, rely heavily on personal contact based channels of information to search for jobs. In particular, networks based on ethnicity, language or common culture were frequently used to identify opportunities for employment. Despite the growth of technology assisted information networks such as LinkedIn, personal contacts and direct approaches to employers were found to be the most successful strategy amongst the working part of the study cohort<sup>39</sup>. Working participants developed their information channels and used particular tactics to secure employment. In this respect, students' information was gathered either in face-to-face situations or from close friends who could be useful in assisting with job applications and giving references. These were seen as more reliable. Students were looking for mostly temporary and part-time work as, due to legal restrictions, they were not permitted to apply for well-paid, permanent positions. Also, the nature of occupations in which participants were engaged was largely unskilled and non-professional. People, for example, were engaged in supermarkets (Cases 04, 05, 34, 42), restaurants (Cases 09, 19), food processing industries (Case 06, 29), local shops (Cases 10, 27), or individual families (Case 12 and 48). The paid work was also temporary for the majority of participants who worked. They provided rationales which suggested that their choice of job was reasonably suited their purposes. For example:

“I was working in a restaurant because I did not want to waste my time to find a suitable job and I got the job only in a restaurant easily, so I picked up that opportunity. I saw so many people working in low paid jobs so I realised that I might also have difficulty to get the desired job and it has been better to just start work without consideration”

-Indian Credentialist (Case 19)

The skill level at which they were employed varied but, according to which participants were employed, jobs did not provide students with many opportunities to enhance their skills as they had initially hoped. There were some exceptions, such as regular training sessions for example, on health and safety, and moving and handling things, which they were required to attend to function at work and comply with UK rules and regulations.

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<sup>39</sup> 58% of participants who worked got their job through friends, while 31.9% participants approached employers directly in order to get employment. University employment bureau or other professional channels were not effective in this regard.

Participants were learning practical skills of work places including working in a team, managing tasks, organising goods and dealing with customers at work. These skills could not be developed in the classroom and tend to help students improve their employability. Nonetheless, working in supermarkets or restaurants did not necessarily satisfy all working participants and a slightly different satisfaction pattern is observed among some.

In summary, the access to employment for study participants in British labour market has been limited due to legal limits on students to work e.g. certain hours to work, restriction on accessing full-time work, and students lacking prior work experiences in the UK. Participants who got into jobs were employed in precarious sort of jobs normally in bar or restaurant and with fewer opportunities to improve skills. This must have disappointed those who were hoping to combine the advantages of education with paid work. However, the advantages in the form of language use in a business setting, awareness of work culture and business practices together with time management and public relations are some of the crucial soft skills and currencies of learning at work could not be achieved in the university environment. The resulting self-confidence and independence should be seen as real advantages and thus must have affected their satisfaction. This is discussed next.

## 7.5- SATISFACTION AT WORK

Compared to their largely satisfactory experiences at University, participants who did work in the UK at some point expressed various degrees of satisfaction with their work. Evidence, particularly in the survey, suggests that aspects of work related to rates of pay, working hours, and working conditions were largely satisfactory. Working students were also mostly satisfied that they were treated with dignity and respect both by work colleagues and by management; although this was not true for all working participants. People did not report severe physical or mental stress. In contrast, the quality aspects of work, e.g. the nature of the work itself, the mismatch between their intended career path and their part-time work, the skill level at which they were working, the opportunities to improve their skills, and the lack of training and exposure were the factors which did fail to satisfy the expectations of working students.

Survey results support the impression that students' perceptions of work were driven not only by financial rewards but mainly for gaining an advantage about current working practices in the UK labour market. These were lacking because students found themselves engaged in low skilled work which did not make the best use of their skills. In this sense,

there was a mismatch between students' perceptions and aspirations of working during their studies and the work-based opportunities available to them.

"I found a job in a restaurant in a job fair organised by my university. This work experience was a bit tedious to me at the beginning as I was a white-collar guy back in Afghanistan and then working in a restaurant did not suit me, but to be independent here, I started working and supporting myself in London. .. The local people here do not work at minimum wage, and big companies and organisations need people from the local community, so you're left with shit jobs, which local people do not do. You have no ways, and there is no equality regarding the job market"

-Afghani Realist (Case 01)

Participants with problematic work experiences end up with a negative image of the workplace, which tends to deter them from thinking about better opportunities for work in the UK. In some cases (Cases 09 and 42), participants had particular experiences, which do not represent a common picture of working in the UK, but rather are nevertheless representative of individual realities:

"I used to work in a bar overnight, but I quit last week. It was a hard job to be in. I had to do the heavy lifting and stuff like that. One of my managers behaved badly with me, that is why I left that job"

-Bangladeshi Realist (Case 09)

And:

"The only difficulty I faced was the racist attitudes at work. The leader at my work, who was English did something wrong, and I made complaints against her and took her to court. It was the only one hearing, but she did very bad to me. At that time I was leaving the job, but I thought I should do something to teach her a lesson to respect others"

-Pakistani Female Realist (Case 42)

This study has found contrasting views with both positive and negative experiences among term-time work participants, yet it remains unclear whether it affected their academic performances. Data reveals contrasting views on this issue among the participants. There are those who report having experienced negative impacts on their performance at University, but this is not a generalisable view. One Highflyer recalls her difficult time at the University, during work in her own words:

"In terms of managing the work-study balance, it is very difficult to manage sometimes. You hardly get time. At the end of work, you feel completely exhausted, and you do not feel like studying. Especially when you are doing a masters, you have to have a focused study. Sometimes it does get difficult... in the first semester it did affect my grades, and in the second semester, I tried to manage

my time. Tried to work during the weekend and somehow did manage so was doing well.”

-Bhutanese Female Highflyer (Case 12)

In contrast, many participants were able to manage their work expectations while doing well in their classes:

“I do not feel that there is any negative effect of working on my studies because I work only 20hrs so can study as much as I could after that. So they are quite separate. I either study or work. Whenever I have an assignment, then I take time off from work. Work is not against my study, but helpful as I can help myself both regarding money and experience. Even though I work, I do better in the classes.”

-Bangladeshi Credentialist (Case 10)

The evidence discussed here suggests that term-time work is perceived by the majority of participants to be desirable, uplifting and a major source of money to enable students to live an independent life in the UK. The majority of participants with a work commitment had less privileged backgrounds and tended to favour work primarily as a source of financial support to meet their cost of living and fund higher education studies after completion of their current program. In contrast to this, privileged students found no attraction in paid work and instead, perceived paid employment as a potential area to avoid in order ensuring their uninterrupted academic progress. Few participants, however, considered term-time work to be an opportunity for the strategic mobilisation of material and soft skills. Term-time work, therefore, does not support the literature, which considers student employment as essentially a source of vulnerability. Instead, it helps students to gather extra resources to make certain adjustments in the trajectory that they have been developing over time. The downside of this experience has been the congested access to the labour market. The majority of working students were engaged in low-skilled occupations with less prospect of learning first-hand skills at a professional level. Nonetheless, work experiences delivered a considerable amount of satisfaction as a whole, with only a few exceptions. This provides us with a sense of changing perceptions of South Asian students towards learning and that ‘soft currencies’ together with formal educational success construct a vision for employability.

## 7.6- THE CHOICE OF PAID WORK IN ETHNIC LABOUR MARKET

This discussion aimed at exploring how experiences of access to the labour market combined with the ethnicity of the South Asian student body and the extent to which this affects their experiences in labour market. Ethnicity refers to the cultural group that a person belongs to. It relates certain people to their social and cultural roots from which group of these people embrace the sense of community and cultural identities. Everyone has ethnic roots and character including appearance, ancestry, religion, diet, and a common language, and based on these, one ethnic group is considered to differ from another. The study cohort comes from a cultural group traditionally associated with an ethnic minority in the UK (Clarke and Drinkwater, 2007; Zwysen & Longhi, 2016). The ethnic identities and belongings in migration have been reported in the literature as barriers, arguably impacting on access to employment and how ethnic identities influence experiences at work (Zwysen & Longhi, 2016; Catney & Sabater, 2015). The disadvantages that ethnicity brings into the discussion is also relevant to student migrants and their search for paid work (Sin, 2016). Similarly, the area in which member of ethnic minority tend to seek paid work and continue in precarious conditions is understood as an ethnic segment of the labour market. The people normally found working in this segment includes working poor, illegal migrants and to some extent 'students' as a temporary workforce (Clarke and Drinkwater, 2007).

Student employment has been presented, in the literature, within the context of financial necessity and lack of support systems for students, particularly those who struggle to progress in higher education. In this context, the prospects of benefits from joining the labour market, while studying, are supported by recognised by scholars; yet its impact on academic achievements and well-being has raised many concerns. These include access to decent employments during and after graduation, the precarious nature of work which students most likely to enter, and suggestions that the intensity of time spent on work instead of study, or lack of time management, create a dilemma in which student employment tends to have a negative impact. The contrasting findings of the positive and negative effects of student employment explained above, polarising debate and question whether student employment is a bad thing? This issue applies particularly to student migrants due to their ethnicity and migrant status. The issue of international students is already problematised in the literature due to the many challenges and difficulties they face in adjusting and making progress at universities across the world. This is mainly because of the difference made by their ethnicity, cultural values, and origins. The experiences and



effects of paid work among student migrants, therefore, could be different as these factors play a crucial role in differentiating students from one another.

Student migrants are normally associated with their inevitable participation in paid work during study abroad (e.g. Sidhu, 2012; Bass, 2011 & 2012; Nyland et al. 2009). As a result, scholars normally list problems caused by term-time work commitments including allowing more time to work than study, lack of time to participate in clubs, society, and wider university life, negative health consequence due to heavy workloads and poor working conditions, lack of rest and self-care and the list goes on. Moreover, student employment is thought to be an area of precarious work practices with low paid wages in insecure and under protected industries prone to the exploitations of employees. Above all, the worrying implications of student employment have been recorded in their contribution to widening the social inequality as the underprivileged or weaker sections of the student body seems to be stuck with student employment with little or no protection from harm. In this regard, recent studies largely focus on the local or national student bodies and international students have received less attention regarding their experiences in labour market. It is particularly relevant, in the context of changing immigration policies and ever-growing evidence, to address the challenges this group tends to face everyday adjustments relating to linguistic and cultural adaptation, isolation, and difficult progress in western education. The effect of student employment might make it worst when combined with the ongoing challenges at the university where the host society and cultural practices may turn student life miserable as a result.

This debate is undermined by the absence of an ethnicity perspective on the labour market. This is an underreported segment where paid work is being offered to people sharing similar ethnicity (Sin, 2016). To join this ethnic labour market, the employee must be aware of the language, cultural values, customs, and ethnic belongings of that particular cultural group e.g. Indian or Pakistani. In restaurants, bar and food, ethnic clothes and grocery shops in London, a substantial portion of shopkeepers are of Asian origin and run businesses with the help of workers who come from Asia. Ethnicity then plays a part in pushing some of the South Asian international students, who find access to the open labour market difficult, to seek work in this less protected workplace. The work opportunities in ethnic segments are not so welcoming due to poor and unacceptable work conditions, low pay, and unprotected workers' rights, resulting in exploitation, unfair treatment at work and the diminishing of self-confidence. Despite the lack of evidence on this segment, opportunities for temporary work are easily available because not all job seeker students

are attracted to it. Compared to the open labour market, ethnic shops, normally owned and operated by ethnic migrants, deal with ethnic goods e.g. foreign groceries, food, and bar restaurants, selling ethnic clothes and running services like mobile phone and laptop repairs.

The evidence gathered in this study provides some understanding of working in such ethnic marketplaces. Participants usually expressed no desire to search for jobs in this particular sector, rather the popular firms such as McDonald's, supermarkets and other high street shops were common places to seek temporary work. Very few participants were engaged in an ethnic segment of labour market mainly due to difficulties in finding a job in open market or because jobs were made available through relatives in London. For example, a Bangladeshi struggler (Case 06) relied heavily on the support he received from Bangladeshi money lenders in London. His vulnerable financial condition pushed him to work intensively, repay the loan with high interest, and work at their shops occasionally.

In another instance, a Pakistani Credentialist (Case 47) had been working, since his arrival, in a shop owned by his uncle who lived in London and funded his studies. The work was in return for the support he was receiving. However, he did not state whether he was receiving regular payments from the Uncle. Similarly, a Pakistani Realist (Case 48) had been encouraged and supported by a London-based uncle who offered him shelter and family comfort in the UK. He joined his uncle's shop to return the favour. Despite the pay for the job these participants (47 & 48) have been doing, this family bond extended support to each other in helping the business and reducing the cost of labour in the family owned ethnic business. The missing link here is whether the work conditions, time spent and responsibilities at the family business were safe and did not undermine students' motivation to progress at the University. This sort of engagement in work was often undocumented but surely involves additional commitments on top of the well-understood demands of academia. Interestingly none of these participants (Cases 06, 47, 48) reported problems with work, despite undefined terms relating to time allocation, pays, and conditions at work. Instead, they expressed their gratitude towards the business owners for their kind support and guidance in offering a comfortable life in the UK. These cases, however, are not common and give us very little information about the wider search for opportunities in the ethnic labour market among other working participants. This engagement may have something to do with family influences on immigration routes mainly found among those who already had relatives living and ready to provide support in London. These types of work relationships are thought to offer less of a financial gain but

provide a trusting relationship to help each other and are therefore justified and perceived as positive and satisfactory. However, other participants who worked normally used the more standard route to paid work in the open labour market, which comes with mixed experiences discussed earlier. Many students have reported difficulties and their likely impact on various aspects of their student life in the UK. In line with this, working students' views on difficulties at work were of interest (e.g. Cases, 01, 04, 06, 09, 12, 19, 21, 25, 29, 42) in sections 7.3 and 7.4.

The chapter discussed term time paid work earlier in connection with the experiences and satisfaction among participants. In doing so, the intensive work pressure (Cases- 04, 06, 12, 21, 25), the lack of time for leisure or socialisation due to work (Cases- 04, 05, 12, 21), the conflicting interests when paid work is taken together with study (Cases-19, 21, 25), and disputes at work (Cases- 09, 29, 42) were identified as problems by working and non-working participants. Conversely, the observations also indicated that the unwelcome side effects of paid work were not common among the study cohort and did not seem to affect significantly the satisfaction levels among them (Section 7.5). Despite these experiences, participants continue to work at the same or other places. This attitude indicates personal consideration and careful observation of benefits at work as well as the importance of paid work in providing benefits from sources other than family.

Due to a lack of data, this study is unable to conclude whether or not student employment has had a negative influence on students' lives and education. However, it presents and discusses a range of mixed experiences of the study cohort, using both a negative and positive lens and leaves the audience with an impression of how students themselves deal with challenges and rationalise their decisions. The disappointment was apparent when paid work failed to live up to their intended purpose or expectations at the level of jobs, opportunities for skills improvement and the mismatch between work and studies but it is unclear whether work engagement had any effects on attainment. Despite these remarks, it seems, from the observed cases, that the tendency to work for benefits, particularly financial benefits, divides the student body based on privileges. The students from underprivileged and middle-class backgrounds tended to accept the role of work while the privileged kept their focus on academic study and the pursuit of excellence. Compared to them, the underprivileged are at a disadvantage because, for financial reasons, they cannot escape from paid work. The work in which they were involved was not promising. Similarly, the prospects of such work could be easily questioned. By looking at these

trends, one might wonder whether paid work pushes the underprivileged to the brink of failure or into major disadvantages.

In the final analysis, it is important to take account of the perceptions of participants and recognises that they evaluate and justify the cost and benefits of paid work. In light of the satisfaction at work, it is essential to acknowledge that working students interpret such experiences as vital to their personal development, for saving funds to support living and for securing advantages in the form of soft skills, habits, and attitudes at work. Paid work, therefore, should not be understood as undesirable but rather as disappointing, because many working students, who were seeking skills gain through work were ultimately employed in precarious positions where these benefits were limited. The impact of the skills acquired during student employment could perhaps be understood by research exploring students' future experiences of seeking good employment after graduation. As the data collected in this research provides only horizontal scanning of the perceptions and experiences of participants' term-time paid work, it does not give us enough information to conclude either in favour or against student employment. The differences found in study cohort makes it difficult to assess whether term-time work has been beneficial or became a burden on working participants. However, the study helps us understand individual choices, preferences and the unique experiences of working for part of the study cohort and shows that it is misleading to portray paid work as a common experience for all South Asian international students.

## 7.7- CONCLUSION

Term-time working has been reported in the literature as an increasing concern associated with the vulnerable lives of international students abroad (Bass, 2012; Sidhu, 2011; Little and Arthur, 2010; Nyland et al., 2009). However, the literature provides a rather partial perspective on growing employment among student migrants by highlighting problematic experiences at work leading to students' vulnerability, affecting well-being and undermining learning achievements. In contrast, term-time work could also be a source of advantages, gaining new skills, and a place of informal learning. A small number of scholars, therefore, have started to pay attention to the benefits of term-time work. In doing so, the advantages of paid work are recognised in improved access to skills gain and competence in the labour market beyond the university, collectively referred to as 'soft credentials' (Li, 2013). In light of this debate, the experience of term-time work among

South Asian international students is missing, and in response to this gap, the chapter investigates the participants' pursuit of advantages through (not) taking part in student employment during their education in the UK. The findings relating South Asian international students are relatively new and suggest advantage from seeking work or already working in temporary positions in London. The study has discovered that participants conceive their study abroad experiences in a broader life course perspective in which learning is not limited to academic achievements or obtaining better grades in the class, but is rather a continuous process of acquiring skills, knowledge and experiences in the form of 'soft credentials' that enable them to be competitive in the labour market. The learning for them thus takes place not only at the university but also at work.

There is also a close association between a desire to work with and the social class of participants. Participants willing to seek or undertaking work have been trying to accumulate both financial advantages and personal development. They are grouped into three sets of people representing a relatively similar background, purpose and attitudes towards term-time work (See table 6). The classification is indicative of heterogeneity in the South Asian student body, based on family background and personality traits in which the privileged group A- tends to avoid term-time work due to having access to resources and capitals in abundance. In contrast, two other groups B -a mixed group and C -the underprivileged accept term-time paid work due to its perceived advantages, including its financial return. Despite initial work related problems and disappointments due to the less promising outlook for skills improvement, the majority of working participants expressed satisfaction with work and the benefits they were receiving as a result. This attitude towards work represents an alternative way of looking at student employment as part of the securing of advantages. This is distinctive compared to the suggestions of previous studies which claim that paid work during study contributes to feelings of vulnerability among foreign students. In light of this finding, difficult access to the labour market is seen as the biggest barrier preventing job seeker participants from gaining work experiences, which are perceived as currency in the British labour market. Other significant findings were, a small number of working students were engaged in an ethnic segment of the labour market for family reasons, while the majority seeks to accumulate advantages in the open labour market. Male participants were actively pursuing and engaging in student employment more than their female counterparts were. The nature of work among the majority of working students was found to be temporary, unskilled and predominantly in service industries leading to disappointments among the many seeking skills and knowledge

enrichment through work. However, no employed participants expressed any urgency to leave their job because of its harmful impact on their education and student life in the UK.

Given the fact that the western educational environment was unfamiliar, challenging and relatively new to the study cohort, the capital accumulation process took place in many ways, but it is mainly their social origin and family attributes that seemed to play defining roles in the students' progression. In terms of the growing concerns over students' attitudes towards term time-work in recent years, this study found new ways of looking at the issue which suggests that work experiences for the study cohort have been essential in providing real life exposure to the British labour market in order for them to improve their skills and performance. Paid work in this process plays a defining role as it allows students with fewer resources to manage their skills deficit during a process of capital accumulation along with providing temporary access to economic forms of capital. However, not all working students benefited in the same way from undertaking paid work, and a deep concern rose over work engagement when the majority of working students expressed dissatisfaction about the lack of opportunities to acquire skills at work.

The academic discourse around the engagement of full-time students in term-time paid work has touched, on one hand, on the issues relating to structural changes in the labour market, its link with the higher education curriculum and the universities' moral responsibilities to protect students' interest and on the other hand, students' perceptions towards term-time work, particularly relating to study-work balance and the adverse effects of extensive work on students' personal life e.g. health and well-being, academic performance and attainments. The extent to which the benefits of term-time work is perceived and utilised by students themselves is also an issue. Within this discourse, the growth of the student as part time worker in the UK and elsewhere e.g. Ireland or Australia is explained by the four contextual factors. These include, 1) the opportunities and nature of employment, 2) the social demographic background of students undertaking higher education, 3) the support system available to students including state funding or loans provision, family funds and the rising cost of attending a university, and 4) organization of class contact and time allocation (Darmody and Smith, 2008). To expand on this, the rise of student employment is seen in the literature as part of the structural changes that are taking place in institutions like the labour market and higher education, under the influence of neoliberal globalisation (Standing, 2011).

The growth of short term, flexible and contractual employment in the developed nations has led employers, in order to remain competitive, to choose students as a potential

temporary workforce over traditional school leavers (working class). The rising cost of higher education at a time of gradual decline in state funding and support to individual students, as well as the lack of family support, push students, particularly those with social economic constraints, to seek paid work during their full-time education. In another assumption, students' social demographic profile is responsible for forcing students with deprived or working class backgrounds to take up working roles more often than privileged students do. The debate normally reflects upon student employment and its associated impact on students' life while attending education in a western society where an increasing number of students are taking up paid work during their education due to many reasons. The effects of taking up employment during education have also been examined to highlight the role of excessive work, the nature of work being precarious and the health consequence that has been associated with poor performance, reduced participation in university life and students' struggle to balance study and work. Many studies have concluded, albeit with significant variations, that the general perception among working students has been that work is justifiable on the grounds of financial security and independence, and subsequent skills gain which adds value to a degree.

After all, our current understanding of term-time work among full-time students is limited to students in western societies and this has been presented in the literature as a national problem i.e. Ireland (Darmody and Smith, 2008), Australia (Robbins, 2010 and Munro, 2011) or the UK (e.g. Canny, 2002). In contrast, term-time work among international students is discussed as becoming part of their migrant profile where paid work during education is used, essentially, to fund study or living costs in the absence of state funding and with all the support they were able to arrange. In addition, term-time work is perceived useful in student migrants' future transition from study to work and ultimately in migration e.g. getting PR (Bass, 2009; Robertson and Runganaikaloo, 2013). The UK, in particular, is discussed in this discourse due to its immigration policy shift controlling international students' access to labour market during and after their studies in the UK. However, there is a serious lack of understanding of the experience of term-time working among international students, particularly among South Asians and its effects on their personal life and study outcomes. Likewise, the above approach does not pay attention to heterogeneous nature of the international student body and socio- biographical processes that diversify experiences and outcomes of study abroad.

In light of literature and evidence gathered in this research, one might question whether paid work during education is always good. There is contradictory evidence in the

literature, suggesting term-time work is beneficial when it contributes to increasing employability and certain assumptions are met e.g. a moderate level of working hours. The benefits could also be justified when considering them as an early transition to work while building an educational base. However, it comes with a cost, on a personal level; paid work commitments during education may lead to health problems and concerns about psychological well-being. Term-time work may increase the workload, create problems in balancing study with work and could ultimately lead to compromised grades or final outcomes of education. Overall, the division that term-time work tends to create within the student population could contribute to social inequality and social stratification in wider society.

The study presented evidence to suggest that term-time work is seen among participants as a reliable source of financial security and is potentially helpful in boosting employability using experiences of working in the British labour market. The immediate benefits of taking up paid work are reported to be financial support for their living and study costs in London rather than a lifestyle choice. The majority of those participants working or willing to work come from a less privileged background with a middle-class base. Term-time work has given them a hope of continuing with their normal life and a sense of independence. Despite a few incidents of dispute at work, working participants appeared satisfied and were not concerned about the effects of their work commitments either on their personal life or on educational attainments. Instead, term-time work was perceived and pursued by the majority of participants to overcome financial barriers and by some participants for skills gains; and in the long run, it was considered as an early transition to work benefiting the final transition to the open labour market after graduation. Given the current climate of the labour market, as Tomlinson (2008) and Standing (2011) have argued, degrees alone do not render graduates immune from the intensifying competition for employment. The precarious condition of work after globalization reduces the prospects of western qualifications. Instead, the employability of study abroad has been extended to embodied skills, e.g. language, professional attitudes and understanding of business operations in the current global political economic climate. In this respect, work in the British labour market is perceived as a currency with which to take positional advantages.

In this study, participants expressed intentions to use term-time work experiences and the finance accumulated through it, either to fund their current or future education or secure positional advantages back home. The major aspect that seems significant was the divide between non-working privileged participants and less privileged working students facing



difficult experiences of balancing work and study in day-to-day life while study itself was already a challenge. Social class seems to play a significant part in the choices of participants and how they are affected by their active involvement in term-time work. Regardless of the rationale that working participants tend to associate with their choices of term-time work, the time consumed by paid work, social class and family pressures to keep on working, and work as a distraction itself, was associated with working students' 'average' academic progress. Work in an ethnic segment of the British labour market has also been considered in this equation. Participants, willing to work or working, predominantly prefer the open labour market over its ethnic segments due to its perceived competitiveness and reliability, and as an alternative to being exploited in the non-regulated sector. Only a small number of those who chose to work in ethnic segments were influenced by family reasons. Given the complex debate above it is important that the cost and benefits of term-time work should be viewed on an individual level. Based on the evidence gathered in this study, it argued that perceptions towards term-time work and its potential use among South Asian international students are changing. It is moving towards recognizing the experiences as part of an early transition to work rather than merely earning money. Not all participants of the study were willing to take part in paid work and those who intended to do so were taking this opportunity to support their living costs and gain independence and skills to perform well at work; except for a few 'struggler' cases where excessive work has been part of their student life. In such cases, social class membership seems to dominate the motivations of students to combine study with work and even become over reliant on work to sustain themselves in education. Using a social class lens, term-time work serves as a function of the class to perpetuate social inequality among the study cohort and tends to disadvantage people with lower levels of resources and poorer support systems. In this sense, term-time work cannot be justified yet it could be used strategically to overcome shortcomings in capitals, particular economic capital, which could then be used to invest in other forms of capitals and so on. Consequently, in the long run, it may result in advantages.

## 7.8- CONTRIBUTION

The theoretical contribution of this chapter has been to recognise previously unknown attitudes towards term-time work and its strategic use in capital accumulation among South Asian international students. Theoretically, the chapter helps us understand the role of social class in shaping students' choices of (not) working during education abroad and the ways in which students strategically use or avoid opportunities of work that could help

embody extra curricular skills and practical knowledge beyond formal learning at university. The term-time work has been viewed favourably by all participants other than the privileged (Group A) students and thus divides the study cohort based on their choices and preferences. Students with less privileged backgrounds, which I grouped as B and C, tend to choose work or were already working more often than those who enjoy privileges that social class has bestowed upon them. The heterogeneous nature of the study cohort could be held responsible for diversifying choices as individual participants provide a different rationale to favour or reject opportunities for term-time work. In addition, working participants have engaged primarily, in service sector temporary jobs with or without precarious working conditions. This finding leads us to rethink the advantages of working in the British labour market and participants' perceptions of its future use. Nonetheless, this finding sheds light on the changing perception of participants towards their transition from study to work in the form of term-time work, which has been positive, despite the nature of work in question. Participants willing to work or those already working tend to associated work experiences with their future transition to work using the currency of term-time work. Therefore, it is common to see more participants willing to work or working at the low skill level yet satisfied with the experiences at work. This is a completely different way of looking at the discourse around whether and to what degree student employment is precarious. Moreover, the problems at work reported by some working participants were outshone by the opportunities presented to accumulate capitals and secure advantages that have been the overarching goal of all students regardless of their social and family background. The vision to seek advantage through paid work goes beyond financial gain by recognising the work place being a source of 'soft skills'. This suggests that the study cohort in the UK consisted of students with a distinctly strategic approach to capital accumulation. Within this polarisation, the privileged actively avoid term-time work to focus on academic excellence alone while other, less privileged students seek advantages by combining work and education. The empirical contribution of this chapter has been to explain the gender difference in preferences for term-time work where male students are willing to choose work or are working more than their female counterparts. Similarly, the majority of participants prefer to seek and join employment in the open labour market rather than in ethnic, non-regulated segments of the labour market, and, those who had been working were satisfied with the experiences of that work.

# CHAPTER 8 - WAYS FORWARD: PERCEIVED OUTCOMES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF BRITISH EDUCATION

## 8.1- INTRODUCTION

The chapter seeks to introduce plans of participants and their intentions to use their study abroad experiences and British qualification, once they gain it. The advantages of British education are then discussed in terms of the expectations of, and differences among participants, as well as how participants intend to benefit from them. 'The return mobility' intentions were examined within the context of changes in student visa policy in the UK which seems to restrict entry to British labour market for overseas students and asks whether it had impacted on participants perceptions about the employability of their British education. Insecurities among participants are then discussed concerning their perceptions of work after graduation and the likely outcomes of their studies abroad. The chapter concludes by examining the social differences between participants, which led participants to choose return or other pathways. The participants' intentions and plans are then discussed to highlight advantages that privileged students seem to benefit from and tend to reproduce their social privileges as a result (Bourdieu, 1986).

## 8.2- LIFE AFTER STUDY ABROAD: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The transition from education to employment or towards a specific career among foreign graduates is important as it indicates their future trajectories. Despite this, the link between study abroad and the use of its benefits, in real life situations, among foreign graduates has received little attention. Post study abroad trajectories contrast significantly because graduates tend to use their experiences and foreign credentials for varied purposes. The dominant trend, already explained in chapter 2, suggests that the benefits of study abroad are normally understood as taking the opportunity to reproduce class relations. The 'forms of capital' accumulated through international education enable students to generate social and economic rewards as well as embody cultural codes which then help them reproduce their social class trajectories. This is normally done in many forms. In some cases, it is achieved by escaping disadvantages (e.g. violence or political instability) at home by moving to western destinations, with or without families, creating a study-migration nexus (Bass, 2009, Waters, 2003 & 2006b). In other cases, it involves going back home with a foreign degree in pursuit of decent employment (Waters, 2008 & 2009a; Findlay, 2011; Findlay et. al., 2012; Brooks and waters, 2011b; Sin, 2009, 2013a & 2013b). Personal capital formation or capital accumulation in and outside of university facilitates social recognition back home that helps students lift their social position and status and achieve distinction by doing so (Sin, 2013a & 2013b; Li, 2013; Miller-Perrin and Thomson, 2014).

However, it is not always just western credentials, but mobility experiences themselves also played a significant role in driving students' success. There is evidence to suggest that students with western degrees, but no mobility experiences achieve less (Waters, 2010 & Leung and Waters 2013); degrees alone are no longer a passport to guaranteed success (Tomlinson, 2008). The absence of mobility experiences could disadvantage those acquiring foreign degrees at home through online courses. This evidence demonstrates the importance of personal capital (Xue, 2008) embodied through attending leading universities rich in resources and with colourful student life. The exposure to such vibrant multicultural university life embodies those cultural codes and tastes that benefit students and help them achieve social recognition and social distinctions. This perception works well if used back home (Albert and Hazen, 2005; Tramonte & Williams, 2010).

Here we see the context in which study abroad experiences and degrees are used and returning home may or may not be enviable. On the one hand, western degrees are very important due to their international recognition and could provide the only route to settlement in the host country; e.g. Indian pursuing PR in Australia. On the other hand, degrees are used back home to secure decent employment that is socially valued. There is also an element of change in immigration policies in the western world forcing international students, to leave the destination upon degree completion. Returning home may be voluntary or compulsory, driven by recent policy changes. In this vein, Alberts and Hazen (2005) found three motivating factors; professional, societal, and personal. Soon (2010 & 2012) examined factors associated with non-return intentions due to country-specific factors e.g. skills use and opportunities rather than social and demographic reasons: these, again, vary on an individual level. Wiers-Jenssen (2005 & 2008) found that the vast majority of students went back home and were at an advantage gaining employment in domestic companies with international assignments compared to local graduates. Santiago and Andrea (2010) also indicate that the perception of employers is that they prefer graduates with foreign qualification. An unusual but important social use of foreign degrees has been identified in which graduates with US engineering degrees in South India seek to improve opportunities for their marriage and dowry options based on their qualifications. This is also seen as a status symbol for the families of these graduates (Yakaboski, Sheridan, and Dade, 2014).

So far, we have seen that the outcomes and use of foreign degrees are individually conceived regardless of the origin, ethnicity, or gender of students. The outcomes of study abroad experiences are considered beneficial, except for those disadvantaged by

immobility, and are used to improve opportunities for employment, migration and other goals for both individual students and their families. In this regard, the employability of a foreign qualification is judged on the quality of education together with changes in self, and possession of personal skills/soft currencies (Li, 2013). Similarly, students enjoy the benefits of study abroad and their respective families who invest their social and financial resources in helping them succeed better than their counterparts. Failure is exceptional and mainly due to the lack of capitals normally accumulated in mobility situations.

Compared to other Asian students, there is a limited amount of evidence to explain the perceptions of students in South Asia towards the outcomes and future use of the qualifications obtained abroad. With the evidence we have to indicate student mobility patterns in South Asia; we are unable to hypothesise post study intentions and future use of British qualification among students and their families in South Asia. There is a stereotype in assuming post study expectations among South Asian will be quite similar to those of other Asian nationals, which is hardly the case. Given the variations in political and economic strength among South Asian nations explained in chapter 4, the return intentions or the intended use of British degrees in the national labour market cannot be generalised. It is also the same at the individual level as participants were on diverse trajectories making use of family and social-cultural resources to contribute to shaping their trajectory along with family inheritance. Unlike above, our knowledge is limited to brain-drain theory or skilled migration, which has been a part of student mobilities from South Asia. Apart from the well-documented trend of Indian students seeking permanent residency (PR) through study in Australia (Bass, 2006 & 2009), we do not know how students from other South Asian countries intend to benefit from their British qualification and what they perceive to be the outcome of their time abroad. The magical role of British education in transforming lives among South Asian is still to be discovered by the evidence gathered in this study. This chapter seeks to answer these questions.

### 8.3- PERCEPTIONS OF THE OUTCOMES OF STUDY ABROAD

This section examines the perceptions of participants towards the outcomes of their studies abroad in an attempt to construct the significance of study abroad as a whole. In this approach, participants consider studying abroad to be an important turn in their personal narratives, beyond the particular role of British education. The study cohort, in general, takes a '*Holistic view*' of their experiences in the UK, which was not limited to any

tangible results, e.g. having a degree or obtaining a job afterwards. Instead, it expanded to and integrated with personality and soft skills' such as linguistic efficiency, increased adaptability to suit the unfamiliar working environment, and the ability to cope with emerging work related challenges<sup>40</sup>. Exposure to western culture and education, for the majority of students, has resulted in gaining confidence, taking control and managing their life, which reflects their transition to adulthood. For instance:

"I have changed a lot. I have become independent. I do not feel dependent on my family or others. If something happens to me, I can manage on my own. I will not call my mum and ask what to do. I cook food. Do not drink, so save money. I socialise within my circumstances. I feel changed, but don't go beyond responsibilities"

-Bangladeshi Credentialist (Case 05)

Another Bangladeshi Realist (Case 04) put it beautifully. He admits that:

"It [British education] will make you more realistic and practical. It would make you forecast what you going to do. It will help you to put yourself in the right place. I do value this educational experience"

-Bangladeshi Realist (Case 04)

Apart from the life-changing impact of studying abroad which participants commonly expressed, employability has always been central to theirs. As one Pakistani Highflyer (Case 41) admitted in her own words:

"I think it [outcome] is more towards employment. The degree makes a big difference, employers will not look at your skills [alone], but to some extent, the quality of exposure does matter"

-Pakistani Female Highflyer (Case 41)

Regardless of the trajectories on which participants were progressing, they were optimistic about the results. '*The Optimism*' that the participant expressed towards their potential outcomes was a relative response to the experiences that they were having. In particular, the hope among Strugglers and, by contrast, confidence among the privileged, of a successful future, derived from this optimism to the extent to which participants believed that British education would help them to succeed in an increasingly congested labour market or business. Successful outcomes for more privileged students seem inevitable while, for other less privileged students, successful outcomes are dependent largely on situational factors. However, for Credentialists and Strugglers, it is more a matter of luck

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<sup>40</sup> Survey revealed that participants considered their study abroad beneficial in terms of improving career prospects (98/120, N=148) and developing career to international level (84/121, N=148). The majority of participants acknowledged the improved command of English (105/119, N=148), and advantages of having international exposure (109/120, N=148). In particular, better prospects of employability from the education (93/121, N=148) and at a personal level, contributing to personality and maturity (97/118, N=148) and opportunities to explore life in general (98/121, N=148).

and fortune with only a limited degree of certainty. One Credentialist expressed his anxieties in these words:

"The graduate labour market is rubbish. There is too much competition among students [in the UK]. I think it is entirely based on luck and preferences. Some say it does not affect one's employability, but it does"

-Pakistani Credentialist (Case 47)

Participants (Cases 01, 29, 30, 33) who had complained about their difficult academic progress and poor work experiences, had expectations of successful outcomes that were similar to those in the study cohort who reported having a very positive time in the UK. There were also doubts concerning outcomes (Cases 22, 40) but these were rare and not representative of the cohort as a whole. The source of this 'positivity' could be understood within the context of greater dependency on education and believes in successful outcomes, expressed widely by study cohort. The embodied familiarity with the culture and resources in their home country and the existing networks of power relations that run through their family's social positioning provided them with grounds for optimism regardless of the experience that they have had in the UK. Participants consciously formulate the relative benefits of their western education within the context of their domestic environments due to the various positional advantages from which they could benefit. One Pakistani Highflyer (Case 41), for example, presented this act in these words:

"If I take my [British] degree back to Pakistan, It will be different from local degrees. This will increase better job opportunities compared to being studied in Pakistan. A UK degree is recognised internationally, and its employability is high, much better than a Pakistani one"

-Pakistani Highflyer (Case 41)

In addition, a few participants admitted that they did not want to return to their home country, mainly due to the incapacity of the country, e.g. Nepal Credentialist (Case 40) or Bhutanese Highflyer (Case 12), or otherwise, because they wanted to explore global opportunities further (Cases 12, 26, 32). Despite this, a large proportion of the study cohort believed that they would make use of their learning when they returned home. A detailed account describing 'return mobility' intentions is given later in the chapter. The general view of the study cohort, regarding the outcomes of their monetary and personal investment in British education, refers to the magical properties of British education, which includes qualification as well as mobility experiences, as an integral part of the education process. This is also reflected in prospects of the British qualification participants intend soon to receive.



#### 8.4- FUTURE PROSPECTS OFFERED BY BRITISH QUALIFICATION

The use of a British qualification and its prospect to secure advantages in the labour market has been questioned. Despite the popularity of British degrees, there are contradictory claims that suggest a degree alone would not be enough to gain employment. The study cohort's response to this claim is mixed where the majority of participants seem to believe the promise of employability benefits while only a few have doubts. Most consider the strategic use of British degree with 'soft skills' acquired through term-time work and university life, to offer a competitive edge in labour market. One participant described it in these words:

"I think it is easy to get a job if you study abroad. It is a good thing to write in your CV, and people see you differently and if you have a UK degree you have a plus point"

-Pakistani Female Highflyer (Case 41)

For the study cohort, the prospects of a British qualification depend upon many factors; for example, qualification recognition frameworks, policy restrictions, and the cultural and labour market situation. The majority of participants, therefore, tended to prefer to move back to their local labour market rather than move onto the international job market. From an outcomes perspective 'employability' is perceived to be the most desirable outcome, but one that is difficult to achieve if the student is relying only on their credentials. In fact, we see a divided opinion on the issue of being able to access good work opportunities with the kind of qualifications that the participants intend to get. However, regardless of the different views on employability, the study cohort agrees on the value of their qualification<sup>41</sup>. Obviously, the perceived advantages that British qualifications would bring led them to believe in the currency of British credentials. As one participant admitted:

"Of course I value my degree, which is not only a qualification but an overall experience of student life at a world renowned institution. I am feeling more capable of managing my career and largely my life as a whole. I think this the UK experience which is giving me an insight which is unique and worth."

-Indian Credentialist (Case 16)

For the study cohort, a British degree is the direct, certified, and relatively visible outcome of their studies, more than their personality development through British education. The academic world is itself a value system in which a British degree is not only useful in getting employment, but also in accumulating forms of capital, for example winning scholarships, being accepted for further studies, or gaining international recognition when

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<sup>41</sup> 74.3% of 148 respondents believe in the value of their qualification.

migrating to settle. In this regard, British credentials are a source of certification of possessing a particular set of skills or qualities that are internationally recognised and valued. As one participant rightly pointed out:

"I know that qualifications from the UK, USA, or Canada are considered more valuable compared to a locally obtained degree. Even though there are American universities providing education in Kuwait, but everyone knows that education standard is not that good. So the perception is that if you have a qualification from London, this means you know something better than others. People would consider you as a valuable asset for their organisation instead of thinking that this person has a degree but not having enough knowledge"

-Pakistani Female Realist (Case 44)

That employer favour western education over local degrees was central to the imagination of many participants who believed that having a British degree alone would be enough. However, many participants do not agree with this opinion<sup>42</sup>. These participants perceived their best chance of employability was by combining their British degree with relevant work experience, and by having the right skills to benefit them in their transition to work<sup>43</sup>. Also, many of these participants were recommending friends and colleagues to study in the UK but with certain caveats<sup>44</sup>. In other words, though participants usually value their British qualification, it does not mean that the entire study cohort believes that employability is the inevitable outcome of obtaining such degrees. Current labour market practices, in their opinion, require the learning of extra skills, which can only be obtained through work itself. This contradiction occurs mainly because of the ongoing experiences of participants who were not able to get professional jobs during term time and who therefore realised how tough access was to good jobs with the help of a degree alone. One participant stated his opinion, which is representative of others too, in these words:

"There should be some working experience, not academic exposure only... The thing is, gaining experience along with studies often come together when it comes to giving an advantage in competition in the labour market."

-Indian Credentialist (Case 19)

The opportunities in the labour market do make a difference when comparing international and local labour markets for employability prospects. Though achieving good employment is getting harder universally, participants seem to be more confident in making better use of their British credentials in their local labour market than at an international level. Many

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<sup>42</sup> 66.2% of 148 participants accepted that 'degree is not enough' to get employment.

<sup>43</sup> 69.6% of 148 admitted that skills and work exposure are essential in order to get jobs.

<sup>44</sup> Only 50% of 148 willing to recommend study in the UK.

factors influence such perceptions, mainly the increasingly congested labour market due to credentialism, the demands for soft skills and real life exposure to work, and the rigid immigration regulations on work that limit the possibility for students to search for and acquire either temporary or permanent work. For example:

"I think it [employability] depends on many things. How much you know. What is your experience and how would you convince your employer. I might have a better opportunity, but at the same time, I do worry about it because there are a lot of good students, better than me and British graduates are struggling and not getting a good chance so how would I expect to get a good chance? But I can only hope."

-Bangladeshi Realist (Case 04)

In contrast to the international labour market, employment prospects in local labour markets are considered better with the kind of experiences and degrees that participants intend to obtain. In addition, participants are very well aware of where and how they can use their 'accumulated capital' to maximise their employability, whether to develop their own business (Case 14, 19, 35), to get into a privileged profession that requires a British degree (Case 05, 26, 34), or just to benefit from positional advantages to compete with local graduates. An important aspect of this certainty regarding their employability on their return home is that participants have access to resources and help to enable their success in the labour market. As one Pakistani female Realist put it:

"If you have a degree from a well-recognized university, then you might have a chance for success. My father told me that if you do not get jobs in London, you may come back and a British degree in Pakistan is highly valuable. So it is going to work in my country, if not in the UK"

-Pakistani Realist (Case 43)

The international market is far more competitive, uses entirely different criteria to assess skills and work experiences, and furthermore, demands an international standard of work and efficiency, which not all participants may be able to fulfil. In contrast, the familiarity of the work environments in their home countries perfectly matches with the skills, credentials and the work requirements of these South Asian students. In addition, the discriminatory view of employers in favour of graduates with foreign qualifications makes it highly likely that they will achieve success in the labour market in their home country. The limited use of foreign degrees in the international labour market could also be seen in the view of participants observing 'credentialism' affecting the currency of British educational experiences. For example:

“The teachers become very flexible sometimes. In the beginning, they warn us that they will not pass us without working hard, but they provide enough marks to pass without much effort. It is not their job to pass everyone it is the students' job to pass. They are more worried about everyone getting a degree than the students themselves are. In my class, some students do not care about the class. They do not turn up to class and do not work hard”

-Pakistani Highflyer (Case 41)

Unlike before, the ‘employability’ prospects of students with British credentials have become a crucial issue amongst overseas South Asian students, and there are many perspectives on the issue. The majority of participants have accepted its currency in the labour market back home while many others disagree with this assumption. Despite these contrary views, many participants offered a rather different opinion in this regard. To represent this, one participant who is pursuing her PhD after obtaining her Masters' qualification in the UK, stated:

“I do not think that employability lies in the number of qualifications you have got but the true learning from them. If you learn well and present well then definitely you would have bright prospects. I am quietly optimistic from the outcomes of my research qualification. This will push my career”

-Pakistani Female Realist (Case 42)

To conclude, this study recognises that the British qualification has been the primary motivation behind all participants' decisions to study abroad, regardless of the intended use of their degree. The personal drive that pushes participants to obtain their degree is highly evident in their opinions and statements.

## 8.5- WAYS FORWARD

Participants' plans provide us with the pattern of their likely career trajectories and indicate how they choose certain pathways to benefit from their education. Students developed their plans using an approach to rank or prioritise one particular pathway over another alternative. This approach to planning future career paths refers to a strategy helping participants, to begin with, many options and examine what works best for them and, if they do not succeed, then go for the next option. This preference giving is an obvious result of uncertainty in the opportunities for good work, which varies across time and space. In most cases, the first option involves finding employment in the UK. This strategy itself is not arbitrary but a process of informed decision-making in which participants assess the

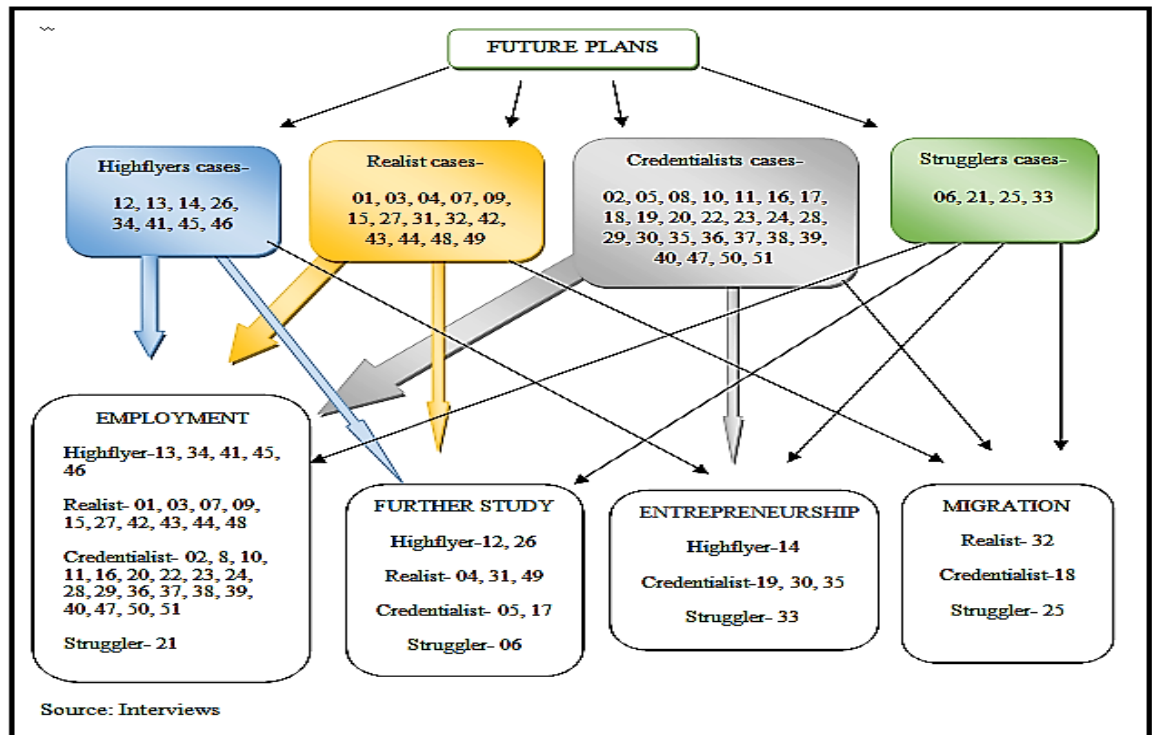
likelihood of their success if they are to proceed with a particular plan. One participant provides evidence of this ambiguity:

“I do not have a [particular] plan at the moment. I have many plans [instead]. If I get a good job, my plan would change and I can think of living here. If I do not, I might think of going back. If I have a low paid job [in the UK], then I might go back instead of having one. It depends on the situation. I am not looking for further study after completion of my studies. I would rather work in Pakistan or Kuwait instead of studying and studying”

-Pakistani Female Realist (Case 44)

Participant, in general, plans their future paths based on their real life experiences in the UK and their reasons for attending a British university. For instance, a Sri Lankan Realist (Case 49) from a privileged background, satisfied with her experiences, and believing in the excellence of British education, decided to continue studying in her field until she had achieved her PhD, to gain positional advantages back in Sri Lanka. In contrast, an Afghan Realist (Case 01) who had experienced academic problems and did not believe in career opportunities in the UK wanted to go back to work in Afghanistan. A Bhutanese Highflyer (Case 12), who had undertaken most of her education abroad and had made a successful transition into the UK academically, wished to either do a PhD or work for an international organisation e.g. the United Nations, but did not consider going back to Bhutan. Thus, participants had a particular path to follow which relates to their future ambitions and the probability of their success, which itself, often emerges from their context. The study cohort, despite having alternative approaches, perceived four possible pathways in pursuing careers after graduation. These are (1) work pathway, (2) further study pathway, (3) migration pathway and (4) entrepreneurial pathway. Finding decent employment either immediately after graduation or after further study has been the most preferred pathway, compared to migration, a least preferred option. Figure -17 represents the participants' career pathways to help understand their likely career advancement, by linking their social-family roots and educational advantages to shape social class trajectories. Figure 17 shows the type of individual participants who intend to choose a particular pathway building a pattern of choices in which the majority seem to prefer immediate employment, followed by further education and constructing an entrepreneurial identity. In comparison, migration received little attention.

Figure 17- FUTURE PLANS



### 8.5.1- WORK PATHWAY

The work pathway was the most favourable choice to pursue after graduation. The majority of participants indicated an interest in working immediately after their graduation<sup>45</sup>. The work pathway consists of three interlinked plans starting with exploring work opportunities in the UK, followed by securing employment back home, and, if unsuccessful, then searching for employment elsewhere. The British labour market represents the opportunity to work at an international level; therefore, the majority of participants intended to make use of their physical presence in the UK by searching for jobs with a British qualification as a first choice. Despite the immigration controls over work opportunities for overseas students, the belief that a British qualification might help them to succeed in the UK persuades them to persist in their efforts. This is also due to an absence of structural barrier e.g. qualification recognition when using British degree in the UK. However, finding a job has not been easy in the UK.

<sup>45</sup> 38.1% of 121 (N-148) of responses expressed, desired to go back to work while 17.3% of 121 (N-148) responses intended to pursue work abroad. Altogether [38.1+17.3%=55.4% of 121 (N-148)] dominate the perceptions of study cohort towards work and career building after graduation. Due to immigration reform in the UK, post-study work (PSW) opportunity has been abolished for UG and PG international graduates so the survey option to choose work in the UK after graduation was not given.

In an alternative option, going back home with a British degree to secure employment seems not only obvious but also certain to most of the participants. There are so many opportunities for finding and gaining paid work in the UK, it is only helpful if work is available in the relevant field. In fact, as we saw in the last chapter, the study cohort struggled to find work during term-time and those who did find work were employed in low paid precarious and unskilled sectors. Therefore, exploring the domestic labour markets seems to be promising compared to the international job market. While competition for jobs is inevitable at both levels, competing with local graduates with the benefit of a British qualification would be a lot easier and more achievable than in an international context; as this case demonstrates:

"I will go back; I have this intention no matter what would be the case that I gonna go back and I will turn around the local industry back there. I know there must be an obstacle and people said that better to stay here. I will not prefer to live here after my studies. This is my first visit to London and London has not attracted me to live here for long....[however] I am concerned about going back and that getting better job is not an easy task, but I am still optimistic"

-Pakistani Highflyer (Case 46)

The background of participants also influenced their decisions to go back to their home countries and make use of readily available opportunities rather than to keep trying to secure employment in the UK. This case presents the background as a motivator to do just that:

"Once I finish my qualification I want to go back as this economy is not booming like India. So not interested in searching for a job here. My family and I have a family history of dealing with diamond business in India for hundreds of years. The only destination that I belong is there [India]. So I will go back and search employment there"

-India Credentialist (Case 28)

In addition to these plans, very few participants (e.g. Cases 12 and 34) aimed at destinations within the international labour market other than the UK<sup>46</sup>. Work pathways represent the majority of interests that participants have expressed one way or another, but all are aiming to search for and secure high-end employment, which would pay off their heavy investment in their British education.

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<sup>46</sup> 17.3% of 121 (N=148) participants aimed at exploring work destination other than the UK...

### 8.5.2- STUDY PATHWAY

A substantial portion of study cohort intended to continue with further studies, in either the UK or elsewhere, rather than seeking work or returning home<sup>47</sup>. Most of these participants (e.g. Cases 05, 06, 10, 49) were studying at an undergraduate level and were seeking further academic recognition by gaining a postgraduate qualification, while those who were studying at postgraduate level (e.g. Cases 09, 12, 45) were pursuing research experiences either in or out of the UK. This trend indicates the necessity of acquiring higher academic credentials to remain competitive. This is due to the credentialism resulting in the devaluation of UG qualifications. Participants, who could afford to continue studying or were willing to continue studying after finishing their existing course, perceived a real opportunity to achieve distinction, by gaining higher qualifications. However, not every participant was fortunate enough to have the necessary support to enable him or her to pursue further education, those participants who wished to do so were very limited, and the reasons for choosing this option varied individually; as these statements show:

"After graduation, I will apply for a graduate job here [in the UK], if I do not get one then I will go back home and will apply there. I hope that after two-three years of work experiences, I will come back to do masters here again. Before masters, I want to gain some work experience first.... I might get better job opportunities if I have done my masters"

-Pakistani Highflyer (Case 45)

Similarly, in this example:

"My plan is to complete my studies here, then go for masters and go back to Bangladesh... find a very nice job and get settled there. My alternative plan is if I get a chance to get PhD funding from the US or any other European country, I will go for that and then will go back home"

-Bangladeshi Credentialist (Case 10)

Higher study becomes instrumental for participants wishing to continue towards achieving academic excellence. For instance, two Bangladeshi participants, (Realist- 04 and Credentialist- 05), intend to continue studying 'Bar at law' in the UK, following their UG degree, to help them enter privileged legal professions in Bangladesh. Similarly, a Sri Lankan Realist (Case 49) was passionate about pursuing her PhD in the UK as she hoped for a better chance of developing a successful career in Sri Lanka. In some instances,

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<sup>47</sup> 15.2% of 121 (N-148) survey respondents were stating the UK as a potential choice to continue studying while 4.1% of 121 (N-148) respondents chose to go back to study and only 5.1% of 121 (N-148) wished to go other destinations to do further study.



participants (Case 09, 10, and 27) also expressed interest in undertaking further study in destinations other than the UK. As one participant pointed out:

“I will go back to Bangladesh. Then I will decide to do PhD from Malaysia. I might find some funding opportunities there [too]. In addition, Malaysia is close to Bangladesh. I am targeting like the national university of Malaysia. This has good ranking in the top 200 in the world”

-Bangladeshi Realist (Case 09)

In summary, the study pathway is seen as a positive alternative to work if people are unable to secure employment. Instead of facing competition in the labour market immediately after completing their UG or even PG studies, studying at the higher level to achieve distinction seems attractive to some. However, undertaking further studies requires additional investment in education, and not all participants were well equipped with resources, which gives an advantage to those who enjoyed the full support of their family and financial stability.

### 8.5.3- ENTREPRENEURIAL PATHWAY

Participants with an economically privileged background intend either to establish their own entrepreneurial identity after having equipped themselves with the skills and knowledge they aim to acquire from British education or to elevate their family business to an international level. Study abroad, in these cases, has become a real family project for the advancement of the family business using current innovations in business and management. With the full support of their family, participants (Cases 17, 28, 30, 31, 33 and 35) chose either to be a part of the family business or set up their businesses (Cases 14, 19). The ambition of these participants was not to achieve employment with a competitive edge of western style managerial skills but to understand the real operation of neoliberal type business and management to achieve their own entrepreneurial ambitions. One participant stated that:

“I do not want to work as an engineer and do coding all my life. I am looking to get into the management while having an engineering base. This degree actually will help to get into the managerial stream of the company. [With this experience] I am looking to open my own business”

-Indian Female Highflier (Case 14)

In another example:

“I want to go back to India to start my own business. I have plans for this, and my parents are ready to support me financially. It would be a web technology development sort of IT Company. I do not want to stay here. I have no plan to move to the US or Australia or anywhere else”

-Indian Credentialist (Case 19)

Despite creating their entrepreneurial setup, many participants were inclined to use their education to benefit their family business. As one participant expressed:

"I wish to go back to India and help in the family business. I do not want to go to the US or other countries. My parents sent me to learn current business strategies, and once I finish my studies I would go back and help them extend their business on the basis of that knowledge"

-Indian Credentialist (Case 30)

In a similar instance:

"I want to be a successful businessman like my dad. I want to go back to India to improve the family business. My dad is doing business at a national level, and I want to extend it to international or global level. I am not interested in settling in the UK or China or anywhere else"

-Indian Credentialist (Case 35)

To follow this line, participants have to be financially strong and able to employ capitals to ensure a successful transition from student to entrepreneur. Apparently, it is a choice only of participants with a privileged background, not a common trend among the study cohort, who seek to benefit from their education to create their own identity with or without family help.

#### 8.5.4- MIGRATION PATHWAY

Very few participants planned to migrate rather than to seek work or further study after gaining their British qualification<sup>48</sup>. Furthermore, migration or settlement in countries other than their own is considered by these participants as a backup plan, in the case of failure to secure employment in their home country. Preference for migration was found most strongly amongst participants from countries where social, economic, or political situations have not made it easy for students to settle back home. For example, a Nepali Credentialist (Case 40) expressed his anxieties in these words:

“The education system is ok, but the problem is political interference in education. We had an election and the assembly could not make a constitution, so we are holding another election, which is costing Nepal billions. I think these are the reasons, why students do not want to go back, even I do not want to go back for another ten years until things settle down”

-Nepali Credentialist (Case 40)

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<sup>48</sup> Only 11.7% of 121 (N=148) respondents in the survey stated their intentions to migrate (without explaining where) after their graduation in the UK.

Apart from situational factors, many students did not consider the settlement as a real option and perceived their studies abroad only as a strategy to avoid unforeseen challenges back home e.g. tough competition for jobs. One Highflyer justified his decision not to settle but to remain mobile to reap further benefits, with the following statement:

“I cannot wait five years or so to get a passport [in the UK]. For me, it is different. My cousin is a CEO, earning \$ 25000 per month and does not have an American passport. He is still Pakistani and working in South Africa. My point here is even without a passport; you can earn well if you are skilled. If you are skilled, then you do not need any passport”

-Pakistani Highflyer (Case 46)

In short, very few students seem to recognise the potential to migrate to the UK or elsewhere. This finding contrasts with those of previous studies which suggest an education-migration nexus leading students from Asia to migration after their study abroad (e.g. Bass, 2012). This study did not collect evidence to conclude why this change in attitude is taking place, but it is certainly the case amongst South Asian international students in the UK.

The four major pathways explained above cover most of the participants’ intended plans and provided us with the context in which their career trajectories can be imagined, going forward. To conclude, work or employment that has been found to be the most preferred pathway while migration was the least preferred. Furthermore, the strong inclination to return home among the study cohort has emerged as an unprecedented mobility trend, which is discussed in the coming section. Also, returning home is not perceived to be a major drawback but rather a positive change in the students’ career development. Moreover, it invites us to view ‘return mobility’ in the context of social reproduction and positional advantages in participants’ home countries.

## 8.6- RETURN INTENTIONS: NEGOTIATING OPPORTUNITIES

The known student mobility pattern from Asia normally indicates a strong inclination to either remain in the study destination or find a better place to settle or migrate elsewhere. Furthermore, the return mobility among South Asian students studying in western destinations is generally perceived as a negative step in the literature. This study adds another dimension by suggesting ‘The return’ as a strategic mobility shift, and that personal circumstance and social differences are embedded in the students' choices to either return home or not. ‘The return mobility’, in this study, refers to the process in which participants seek to negotiate the advantages of their education by preferring to return home after their studies. The rationale behind this perception is manifold. Firstly, the initial idea of going abroad to study was individually conceived and planned around the key perception that ‘*accumulated cultural capital*’ would benefit them on their return. Secondly, the competitive environment of access work during and after graduation in destination and other advanced countries has encouraged participants to think of going back to their home country as a practical and beneficial option. Thirdly, given the immigration reform in the UK, participants were aware of the limited chances to find work or to settle in the UK, and this encouraged them to prepare, mentally, to return. Benefits on return have been widely acknowledged by participants, regardless of their background. Furthermore, they are presented with a sense of control over outcomes, if nothing goes unexpectedly wrong. This perception contrasts with what Findlay et.al. (2012) proposed in their scheme<sup>49</sup>.

A clear distinction can be drawn between participants with privileges (Cases 09, 14,17, 19,28, 30, 35, 41, 45 and 46) who had no desire whatsoever to be in the UK after graduation, and those (Case 10, 15, 20, 21, 34, 42 and 48) who wanted to add value to their practical learning in order to bridge the gap between themselves and privileged created by social differences. The most important factor that deeply affected participants' wish to return home was the rapidly changing visa regime for international students in the UK<sup>50</sup>. The controversial policy move to restrict work opportunities during and after studies,

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<sup>49</sup> King and Findlay (2011) suggests that privileged background influences students' success in elite secondary education, which continues in international education, leading to international professions. Therefore, the difference in students enables the privileged to succeed while the less privileged face challenges.

<sup>50</sup> See table-

which prevented many of them from gaining work experience, has been criticised by many participants. One person commented:

“I would say if you are opening the door for students to study than you should also provide opportunities to get work experience here [in the UK]. The thing is, gaining experience along with studies often come together when it comes to giving an advantage in competition in the labour market. It does not make any sense otherwise when you cannot apply your academic understanding in the real world.”

-Indian Female Realist (Case 15)

Similarly, one participant who did not envisage a better career for herself in Bhutan and was therefore willing to go for a PhD, or to work internationally stated:

“Since I am not in a position to judge the immigration reforms [in the UK]..., however, I do think that it is fair to think about their national priorities and citizens, but I also feel that we should have PSW for another five years and so, to help international student find better jobs in the UK.... I feel if I would have this opportunity so could have control over my future, but it is no more.”

-Bhutanese Female Highflyer (Case 12)

In addition, one participant felt discriminated against in the access to work opportunities, compared to local British and European graduates in a competitive labour market, which he cannot hope for:

“The immigration system in the UK discriminates against [International] students . . . It is like, I come to study and will go back without the real knowledge of the subject in action [I am] not insecure, but I feel discriminated against because I do not have the opportunity to explore myself”

-Bangladeshi Credentialist (Case 08)

Participants with privileged backgrounds were willing to return home to contribute to and benefit from the family business. In contrast, many participants had expected to have additional work-based learning opportunities, and it was the British immigration policy that had a negative impact on their future trajectories, forcing them to return home without having equipped them with the work experiences of the British labour market. Immigration policies in the UK had made students' transition to the global market difficult, and thus forced participants to consider leaving the UK immediately after obtaining their qualification. Also, the changing immigration regime has increased the difficulty and affected the experiences of some participants, if not all. In the current policy situation, ‘the return’ was perceived as inevitable among the less privileged participants who were seeking work experiences as an additional value, to ensure their positional advantages. Individually and for the majority of students, returning home has been the best way to

progress, but for some, it has been perceived as a setback, while others still, did not care whatsoever. All participants had ideas and plan they were trying to follow, but for some, ambiguity overshadowed their way forward.

## 8.7- INSECURITY CONCERNS

Until recently, student migration has not been associated with vulnerability and insecurities but recent literature has illustrated an alarming rise in the number of violent incidents against the overseas student body in Australia (Bass, 2009, 2011), and the making of student migration a political agenda, both in and out of the UK. The evidence of this study does not support the idea of a precarious student life that made the study cohort feel unsafe in the UK. Instead, an intensifying desire to seek work during and after their education in the UK and anxieties over their uncertain futures was expressed by some participants. Both of these factors have been understood as sources of insecurity but in different contexts, and were experienced by only some, rather than all participants. The concept of 'The Precariat' (Standing, 2011) uses employment as an instrument to reveal emerging insecurities in ways of living and existences, but this does not necessarily fit with the experiences of the study cohort in the UK.

In fact, not all participants in this study wanted to get jobs or were involved in paid work activities in the UK, and the majority felt confident that they would secure a well-paid job back home. Apart from concerns relating to difficult access to work for some participants (Cases-14, 15, 18, 20, 29, 30, 40 and 47) and the sense of working in low skilled work positions (Cases 01, 33), participants who worked in the UK rejected the feeling of insecurity related to work and their work-based environment described by Standing (Standing, 2011). Participants who worked at some point during their time in the UK were fairly satisfied with their working conditions (in terms of -based security, health and safety provisions, their work-based income, flexible timing, working hours, pay and related benefits - see chapter 7). Furthermore, participants who had a particularly difficult transition through British education did not report feelings of insecurity or risk to their existence in the UK but rather were satisfied with their experiences.

Despite fairly satisfying experiences at work reported by the majority of working participants, the survey suggested that students had insecurities concerning their career

prospects and future outcomes<sup>51</sup>, along with a small number of discriminatory incidents at work experienced by some participants. One Bangladeshi realist (Case 09) left his job after an argument with the manager, an Indian Credentialist (Case 29) left his work due to a dispute of similar nature, and a Pakistani female realist (Case 42) took her manager to court. Even so, these students do not express feelings of insecurity, if they had them, in the same way as Standing (2011) argued. For example, one of the above participants explains her view of insecurity, but the context and urgency are visible in the statement:

“I am insecure. I do not know what will happen in the future. Should I buy a house here or not, I cannot plan where I will be after five years. What to do once finish qualification and in this sense, I am insecure. However, I am ok now if nothing happened I will go back to Pakistan and start my career over there.”

-Pakistani Female Highflyer (Case 42)

In general, insecurity was experienced in the form of uncertainty over the outcomes of their British educations, as participants felt incapable of accessing the UK labour market after graduation and yet they were satisfied with their education:

"Insecurity has been always there as you spent so much on studies. You come all alone from a long way with the idea of getting a great job in mind. However, the job always comes with insecurity. Survival [in the UK] is a source of insecurity for me."

-Indian Female Realist (Case 15)

In light of this view, an overlap between insecurity and uncertainty could be seen in students' responses, which was often associated with the future. One Sri Lankan Credentialist (Case 51) explains his anxiety in these words:

“I do not feel insecure as I am studying in London, which I think will be good for my future, but I am scared about my future as competition for jobs is getting higher and if I go back, I have to find a way to get a good job which I do not think is easy. Actually, [at the moment] I do not have a good job to worry about losing it. The problem is to get a good job, then secure it. I am not there yet.”

-Sri Lankan Credentialist (Case 51)

Many participants also feel an obligation to become independent not to over exhaust their family support, which, itself, brings a feeling of insecurity and anxiety. As one participant expressed it:

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<sup>51</sup> 79/114 (N=148) respondents felt insecure regarding current and future employment, while 75/114 (N=148) were insecure about income in the UK. 63/114 (N=148) insecure due to the financial commitment. In addition, 81/114 (N=148) survey participants were insecure about career and 80/113 (N=148) had an insecure feeling about the employability of the British degree. In terms of immigration status, 81/113 (N=148) participants agree to the fact that they feel insecure. Moreover, 70/114 (N=148) were insecure about the future in general.

“I do have a bit financial insecurity in the future. Now my parents have invested so much in my career in the UK. They paid tuition fees and initial living expenses, so I have an obligation to pay them back or look after myself in the future. So there is insecurity going on. Whether I will get a job or get funding for a PhD, I have to go for it.”

-Bhutanese Female Highflier (Case 12)

Similarly, an individual's family issues are also linked to the feeling of insecurity, but the context of this insecurity is distinct. In a rare example, one participant underlines his difficulties in this form of insecurity. He stated that:

"One thing has heavily bothered me. I have family over here. I do not have right to live here longer or have an opportunity for decent jobs. This is the one thing, which makes me feel insecure. I have a job in India; I do not want to lose that too until I get better employment here. I do not have another option, except to finish this qualification with good grades"

-Indian Credentialist (Case 18)

In summary, we have witnessed that a sense of insecurity exists across many cases, though it has not been similar to the notion of precariousness and the ambiguities in outcomes often experienced on an individual basis. I have learned that participants were under the impression of quality education and the western way of life in London, which helps them outweigh the feeling of insecurities with perceived benefits of British education and mobility experiences in the UK. This is simply not the character of precariousness. Also, insecurity captures the space in the personal narratives of those who had problematic access to resources, support, and a serious lack of opportunities due to policies in the UK.

## 8.8- CONCLUSION

This chapter examines the perceptions of the study cohort about the outcomes and prospects of their British education. It revealed that participants, in general, are optimistic about accepting British education for its rewarding outcomes and hopeful that they will benefit from their heavy investment in study abroad. Similarly, the future prospects of their British education were perceived as promising too, both in terms of securing attractive livelihood options and increasing social recognition for them and their families. Despite this, participants intended to use their study abroad experiences, including their degrees, for varied and different reasons. A majority of them aimed to access decent employment, preferably back in their home country, while another substantial group were seeking a competitive edge through further education. In some cases, participants desired to establish their own entrepreneurial identities; thus British education becomes a vehicle from which



to derive their success. Finally, a small number wished to pursue advantages by migrating elsewhere.

Given the differences among study participants, there is no single pattern associated with the use of their British education but rather, personalised planning to shape their future career trajectories. In this respect, four particular pathways have been recognised, representing a majority of participants willing to return home. The return intentions have been widely cited as making 'return mobility' a reluctant move in the wake of immigration policy and visa restrictions denying their access to work opportunities in the UK. However, for some, it is voluntary step while for many it has become enviable due to British immigration policies shifts. Return to work back home has been the most preferred choice for the cohort studies although many intended to continue studying in the UK or elsewhere. Some privileged participants chose to return home with the intention to establish their business and/or extend that of the family. Only a few intended to migrate. The decision to go on to further education, set up one's own business, or extend the family business is all choices of the privileged, which require additional investment. Only a privileged few could afford to continue investing Capitals into these accumulation strategies. Migration is the least favourite option among those coming from unsettled political, economic countries. Thus, there are personal, social and contextual factors responsible for the diversity of future intentions and career paths. The practice of 'Return mobility' to achieve positive benefits for students and families provides significant evidence to support social reproduction theory. The reproduction of class advantages is achieved either by protecting access to employment, succeeding in business or by pursuing academic excellence. The study participants had a clear inclination towards returning home. However, those wishing to migrate to escape the disadvantages of the home country, which is a way to distinguish themselves from local graduates and generate mobile identities, pursue a path towards social distinction. It is particularly significant in small nations (e.g. Nepal and Bhutan) where migration of skilled workers has been a national problem and often criticised, yet on an individual level, it is seen as a form of social distinction and valued for its personal benefits e.g. remittance and status gain to the families of the mobile individuals.

Following the above, participants tend to harvest benefits from mobility experiences and British education on an individual level, which best fits their personal and family aspirations as well as country context. The only concern has been expressed by many participants is that despite their hope to extend their stay in the UK to find better jobs after

completing their studies, the current British policy made it difficult for them to do so. There is a desire among the study cohort to accumulate capitals by participating in the British labour market after completion of their current studies. This opportunity, which could have sharpened their competitiveness and improved employability, has largely vanished following policy restrictions on international students' access to work in the UK. This blocking of access to the British labour market limits the prospect of the study cohort to move on into international jobs thus forcing many participants to return home as the first choice. Apparently, it disadvantages those who need a little more time in the UK to prepare themselves for decent jobs or to accumulate capitals e.g. funds to invest into their life. Many participants with shortcomings in their stock of capitals were expecting a longer stay in the UK, to retrieve more benefits or prepare themselves for challenges of the labour market. Some of the more privileged students had already chosen to stay on for further study with similar expectations, but this was not an option for everyone. This situation gave rise to insecurities and uncertainties among those who felt difficulty in the policy shift and it increased expectations of leaving the UK upon completion of their degree. However, these insecurities were not as intense as suggested by some scholars (Standing, 2011). They are expressed in a way to suggest uncertainties and anxieties in the transition to work, particularly at home, rather than a sign of precariousness. These feelings were quite common and did not represent a lack of trust in outcomes of their education in the UK.

## 8.9- CONTRIBUTION

The theoretical contribution of this chapter has been to explain the ways in which the study cohort intend to make use of their mobility experiences, their British education, and its products i.e. a degree to reproduce social class advantages. Despite all odds, the perceptions of participants of positive outcomes and the use of British education to secure advantages in the form of employment, setting up self and family entrepreneurship or by migrating elsewhere, have been conceived within their own social and biographical context. For example, students with a business background tend to embark on entrepreneurship while those coming from the middle class aimed to achieve positional advantages and those who were influenced by the domestic culture of migration (skilled or due to violence) at home tend to choose higher studies or migration to escape return. This should be viewed within the culture of migration being part of the social hierarchy and class relations, which have been developing over decades e.g. Nepal (Bhattarai, 2009, 2011) where successful migration is regarded as a form of distinction from rest of the community which is left behind.

Social reproduction is pursued strategically using the exclusive currency of British degrees and associated mobility experiences. The British qualification provides real benefits within the process of reproduction of class advantages as it allows students to climb up on social ladder by using credentials in securing employment, entry to higher studies using current degrees and by using recognition of British degrees in international migration. In addition, the chapter contributes empirically by recognising the distinct and different pathways that students are willing to follow in the future, which contrasts with the widely cited view of students' intentions to stay on in destination countries. The return intentions among the majority of participants have been understood, previously, in relation to the impact of policy shifts in the UK, which seem to contribute to the incapacity of students to enjoy the full potential of British education and drives their inevitable return home, producing insecurities about their future, as a result. However, the evidence presented in this chapter does not support the idea of insecure groups and the emerging idea that this creates a new dangerous class, 'The Precariat' (Standing, 2011). In addition, the chapter introduces the idea of 'return mobility' as a new dimension to the debate around skilled migration and the adoption of graduates with international qualifications, in developing the economy. The chapter also supplies evidence to begin the debate about the impact of a policy shift in the destination, for future mobilities, among international students.

## CHAPTER 9 - CONCLUSION AND CONTRIBUTION

## 9.1- INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to conclude thesis by presenting the findings of the research to answer the 3 research questions set out in the introduction of the thesis. The discussion begins by highlighting the gap in our knowledge as presented in chapters 1 and 2 and provides a rationale for the choices of analysis; 1) South Asian students and 2) Post-1990 HEIs in the UK. In doing so, it will show how this study arrived at the research questions and attempts to answer them by adopting a specific methodology. To answer the research questions the chapter combines all the findings presented in the different chapters of the thesis, in particular, to answer research question 1, which asks why students in South Asia travel abroad and pursue an education in the UK. The findings of chapter 5 address this. Similarly, the findings of chapters 4, 6, and 7-answer research question 2, which asks how are the experiences of South Asian international students associated with their social class trajectories. Research question 3, which asks how South Asian international students evaluate the cultural, social, and economic benefits of their study in the UK, is addressed in chapters 6 and 8. In light of the findings and conclusion, this chapter explains the scope and significance of the research and states how the study makes an original contribution to knowledge. The chapter finishes by acknowledging the limitations of the findings and makes recommendations as to how this research could be developed in future studies.

## 9.2- CONCLUSION

International mobility of students has become a success story both for knowledge producers in the global north and consumers of this knowledge in the global South (Sidhu, 2012). In the wake of neoliberal globalisation, national policies and strategies in developed nations have facilitated a phenomenal growth in the number of students taking part in international education. This has been a part of national strategies, both in developed and developing nations, to benefit from the best and brightest students and their human capital in the knowledge economy. Despite the ever-growing literature that discusses international and regional trends of student mobilities and international students' experiences in destinations, the student mobility between South Asia and the UK has largely been neglected as discussed in chapter 1. Until recently, the existing literature, superficially, presented statistical evidence to suggest who goes where in South Asia within the context of migration theories, using a push-pull model or Brain-drain discourse to represent the

perspectives on sending and receiving countries'. In addition, our current understanding of international mobilities and the experiences of students, particularly those who are originating from South Asia, have also been limited to explaining the migratory process or the problematic experiences encountered during these students' transitions to international education and employment (Bass, 2009, 2012). This approach recently has been challenged by many scholars (Raghuram, 2009& 2013; King and Raghuram, 2013, Findlay et.al. 2012; Brooks and Waters, 2011) who embrace 'mobility' as a series of positive experiences. The discussion they tend to engage in has tried to understand human experiences of mobility and the ways in which these experiences could be used to produce advantages through international education. In doing this, an existing body of knowledge has emerged which suggests that social reproduction theory (Bourdieu, 1986) has significant implications when it comes to understanding the social demand for international education, in particular, western education. Following this discussion, international student mobility from South Asia to the UK has largely been overlooked and neglected. This is despite a significant contribution of South Asian nations in the growth of the international student body worldwide. Following an extensive review of the literature, the research began to answer three important questions to address the lacuna in our understanding of 'the mobility, education, and employment among South Asian international students in the UK.' These included:

1. How do international students understand the advantages of cross border mobility in education and, in particular, why do South Asian international students pursue education in the UK?
2. How do the experiences of South Asian International students in the UK fit with their social class trajectories?
3. In light of experiences, how do South Asian International Students evaluate the long-term cultural, social, and economic benefits of studying in the UK?

In order to answer these questions, for the purpose of analysis, the study focuses on international students coming from South Asia and studying at a Post-1992 university in London. The rationale for the selection of South Asia and Post-1992 has been given in sections -3.4.1 and 3.4.2 respectively. In the process of seeking answers to the research questions, the study adopted a blend of methods in which a fully structured online survey was deployed, 1) to explore the study population in Post-1992 HEIs in London and widens the sample size and 2) to develop a context for the in-depth qualitative investigation to understand students' experiences. In this respect, the online survey served an exploratory

role only and the statistical analysis of the survey was used where appropriate to support qualitative findings. Prior to investigating and presenting the qualitative findings, the results of the survey were presented in Chapter 3. Following a robust methodology, the findings of the research have been presented in Chapters 4-8 and provide evidence to answer the research questions as follows.

**Research Question 1: *How do international students understand the advantages of cross border mobility in education and in particular, why do South Asian international students pursue education in the UK?***

The findings of the study support Bourdieu's theory of the social reproduction of class privileges where the pursuit of British education among South Asian international students was found to be a strategic undertaking to secure or reproduce social class privileges. The findings suggest a strong and positive perception among study participants that the benefits of British education could lead them to achieve either decent employment, the ability to extend family business, set up their own business or build a career either at home or abroad. The use of international education to accumulate capitals, particularly culture capital (i.e. embodied and institutional) have been observed elsewhere by many scholars (e.g. Waters, 2008; Findlay et. al., 2012; Brooks and Waters, 2011; Sin, 2013 and Xue, 2008). Their assessment of family strategies in education has been similar to that of this research. However, the findings of this research advance this discussion by exploring social and biographical differences, which lead to the recognition of the heterogeneous nature of the South Asian international student body in the UK. This study argues that not only does British education contribute to social class reproduction among the study cohort, but it further exacerbates social inequality by rewarding international students based on their meritocratic performance in the education instead of paying attention to social, economic difference exist in their family roots and biographies. These have been explained through the use of a typology and by outlining student trajectories while addressing the second question.

The study shows students' desire to attend British education is motivated by improved access to quality education, the objective of acquiring a competitive edge for employment in the labour market, and/or to taking care of the family business or establishing their own. The advantages of attending British education have been understood among students in the form of gaining positional advantages in the labour market. All of these reasons could be conceptualized within an overall intention to gain privileges or remain privileged by attending foreign education, which they would be unable do through local education. British education is perceived to come with the necessary qualities that fit the criteria of

family expectations of maintaining social class privileges in South Asia. In this respect, study abroad is considered a family project in which students and their family invest capitals in British education in order to accumulate and produce a distinct version of culture capital, concealed in British degrees and embodied forms of capitals i.e. foreign knowledge, language, taste attitudes and personal traits. In addition, it was found that participants' study abroad decisions were grounded in the social class process in education, in that they and their families had been mobilising capitals to advance their career and educational achievements. This took place prior to attending British education and was essential to their success in study abroad.

Participants and their families approached British education in a number of ways. It seems that the broader distinction they made was based on academic achievements between home and international academic spaces. For a typical middle-class family in South Asia, social positioning and being employed as an elite professional are factors that have been closely linked with the possession of key sources of social status and recognition. The democratization of higher education and credentialism in their home countries has resulted in local graduates holding relatively similar qualifications that carry more or less equal levels of cultural capital. In order to outperform local graduates in a context of ever intensifying competition, participants and their families seek to benefit from positional advantages gained through elite British credentials. British education is also considered to be socially rewarding. This could bring social recognition to the family and provide a competitive edge in the labour market, for participants themselves. Chapter 5, in particular, demonstrates the individual and family aspirations behind the selection of foreign education for its socially recognized outcomes and because it can be used to maintain or gain access to professions in the local labour markets of the students' home country. As discussed in Chapter 5, many South Asian countries follow British style democracy and legal systems, and the image of the British Raj still influences both state and society; the people continue to regard British education as worthy of possession. Undoubtedly, the students' domestic labour markets are structured within these premises. This is particularly the case in South Asian nations where people do consider foreign education to be something that not everyone can succeed in and therefore the scarcity of foreign knowledge, language, and credentials possess qualities, which can benefit students and their families.

The choices of the participants to study in the UK have been dominated by many factors including the exclusive currency of British degrees in the employment market, which



enhance the employability of participants. The study cohort understood the exclusive character of British education based on their construction of quality criteria by referring to the multicultural class environment, internationally designed course curricula, access to a wide range of academic resources, engagement with industry, vibrant university environments, new ways of learning, and the use of technology. These advantages were perceived to improve the employability prospects of students, following their education in the UK. The social class advantages that British education could provide for students was seen as an alternative but secure way to gain entry into labour market positions that are socially valued and thus can (re) produce the social dispositions and statuses that families had enjoyed for decades.

The selectivity among the study cohort choosing British education was based on financial, cultural, and social factors, including the lack of quality education at home, tough competition to access national elite HEIs (i.e. IIM and IIT in India), and the traditional type of education system in South Asia. The employability issues of local degrees, the public perceptions of foreign education and foreign degrees, the easy student visa provisions and inclinations of students towards personal attachments with London as a study location, were all influential factors leading students to choose the UK. A noticeable aspect of the selection process was the low priority given to the world ranking of HEIs in the UK, or their reputations in the academic world. The choices of families were focused on the UK in particular, as the preferred country of study and, to some extent, London as the location while students were largely concerned about the subject disciplines, London as location and any financial offer i.e. funding or scholarships at the University, which might be available. Students, including Highfliers, seem to negotiate their choices and choose their respective Universities due to the fee structure and funding options or were influenced by agents. In addition, a number of other factors such as easy visa processes or easily available University study offers came into play. As explained in Table 4 in the conclusion of chapter 4, the majority of participants were Credentialist types, (25/51) followed by Realists (14/51). Only eight participants were considered Highfliers and they chose to study in a Post-1992 University in London (See Appendix-F). This finding could be interpreted in many ways but it should be seen in the light of the tough competition for access to elite HEIs in South Asia. Chapter 4 discussed the growing educational opportunities in parts of South Asia and suggested that Asian Universities are rising on the world ranking of HEIs, as argued by Altbach (2013), Altbach and Umakoshi (2004). It is possible that students with privileged and dominant social class positions do not necessarily leave the national HEIs and tend to remain privileged by acquiring national

'elite' education. This is particularly true with regards to India where national elite HEIs are recognised but difficult to access and facing capacity problems. Altbach evaluates India education system as an 'island of excellence in a sea of mediocrity' (Altbach, 2013). In addition, Deshpandey (2006) argued that national HEIs in India are disproportionately occupied by Upper Caste and privileged. This could have caused the lower representation of Highfliers in the study cohort from India. Due to a lack of data on other parts of South Asia, we can only assume a similar pattern in other countries to suggest that privileged students in South Asia do not necessarily leave the region to access international education. The reason why Highfliers in the study cohort chose a Post-1992 University in London was mainly due to the funding at the University (Cases 14 and 41) available to bright students and acceptance of the public perception that British education is worthwhile without paying much attention to the ranking or reputation of University itself (Cases, 12, 13, 26, 34, 45 and 46). In a majority of cases, the perceptions of participants of achieving distinction has been based largely on the comparative benefits of accessing British higher education, in which participants purposefully compare the education system of Britain with their own (home country) and expressed happiness due both to escaping the disadvantages of their national education system and successfully being able to access a British University in London. This has been found equally important among the study cohort regardless of their 'types', or trajectories. It is also important to recognise that competition and access to British elite HEIs would have been difficult, as in India, and this may have reinforced participants' choice of Post-1992 University. Likewise, the tough competition in access to national elite HEIs may have resulted in 'second choice' motivations, as proposed by Brooks and Waters (2009b), in which students chose to pursue study abroad due to failure in accessing desired study options at home,

Following above discussion, a significant finding, which could help us understand the students' choices with regard to Post-1992 Universities, has been the regional trend of 'Step migration'. The importance of step migration in this discussion is twofold. Firstly, there is a regional student mobility trend in which India is a stepping-stone to attract bright students from neighbouring nations and assists them to invest and accumulate capitals, using Indian higher education, which then could be invested in international education in global top destinations, particularly in western countries. Secondly, this trend confirms that there are regional opportunities to pursue and there is a growing body of students following such routes to enable them to succeed in the labour market. However, it is not necessary that they will follow international routes of academic distinction. Thus, it cannot be ruled out that study abroad is the ultimate route that Highflier type students in South Asia will

pursue. It is possible that Highfliers choose to study abroad options other than Post-1992 Universities in the UK or elsewhere. A significant portion of South Asian international students chooses to study in other Anglophone destinations such as the US and Australia. What is important here is that the student population originating from South Asia is significantly diverse and heterogeneous; thus, it is hard to explain precisely what motivates them to pursue international education abroad and this varies individually.

To explain the role of families in decision-making, the study found that there was overwhelming family involvement in both the decision-making process and the financial support to participants, to enable them to pursue their education abroad. In the study datasets, the majority of participants admitted that they were solely reliant on the support of their families to fund their studies and the cost of living in the UK. Some students were in direct contact with close relatives in London. The study identifies four types of families, 1) international, 2) entrepreneurial, 3) traditional middle class, and 4) emerging middle class, depending on their stock of capitals and social class positions. Given this classification, families in this research found their own ways to prepare participants for studying abroad. For example, students with a privileged background were able to access elite and private schooling at the secondary level and forms of international education prior to accessing British education. The decision-making process was also found to be influenced by a collective family effort rather than by individual choice in the majority of cases. This includes involving the use of agents or relatives in London to choose their specific study destination. Although participants were also a key stakeholder in the selection of destination, course and location of study, their reliance on family resources is clearly visible in the data. In the majority of cases, the family seems to support students' studies abroad by putting family resources and forms of capital into the study abroad project as a family investment. It seems that studying abroad has been, for the majority, a family project in which the family arranged both material and social resources and employed them to make the participants' journeys possible. Though participants themselves understood the real advantage of attending a British university in relation to their prospects for employment, it seems that families usually perceived the benefits of studying abroad to be more related to earning social respect and status for their families.

Gender preferences in family choices in South Asia have been found in the data. Despite the lack of statistical evidence to support the argument, qualitative inquiry suggests that the majority of female participants in this study came from privileged backgrounds and were heavily reliant on their families for support. Some of these students had prior exposure to

international education (case- 03, 12, 13, and 42) and many were studying on official sponsorships, either by their home government (03, 13) or by their British university (14, 41). In addition, almost all of these students had undergone elite or private education in their home country. In terms of trajectories, female participants were likely to be Highflyers (case- 12, 13, 14, and 41) and Realists (case- 03, 15, 42, 43, 44, 49). This is suggestive of a narrow gender preference, culturally embedded in South Asian societies, for males rather than females to pursue education abroad. It seems that only a few privileged families could afford international education for their daughter. The response of female participants also suggests that there are strong expectations from their families with regard to their social conduct and life in the UK and for them to stay closely connected with their family. Female participants were keen to keep their social contacts limited, to purposefully avoid 'drink and dance, youth culture', and to stay focused on their academic progress. Apart from their social and cultural preferences, the rest of their experiences were more or less similar to their male counterparts in the study cohort.

**Research Question 2: *How do the experiences of South Asian International students in the UK fit with their social class trajectories?***

The experience of the study cohort has been found as a breakthrough in knowledge compared to those studies which stereotype international students' experiences as homogeneous. Instead, the study argues that there is a variety of experiences, which indicates that social class difference and biographical distinctions cannot be presented under a common heading. To address the differences, which exist among the cohort, the study developed a four-part typology and series of trajectories based on students' very personal experiences. The detailed overview of the personal experiences of the study cohort tells us different stories and, unsurprisingly, they all fit well together into a grand narrative of the social (re) production of advantages. In this respect, prior to understanding the experiences of participants, which shaped their study abroad journeys in relation to social means, we must acknowledge the diversity of the study abroad experiences themselves. The cohort consisted of a variety of people who do not share similar experiences but who could nonetheless be clustered. The study found it more useful to better understand their experiences by linking parental attributes with students' academic and financial backgrounds. In line with this, the academic experiences of participants vary mainly due to the diverse dynamics of the capital set of an individual participant. The examination of the particular academic transitions of socially diverse participants suggests unequal performance and that the degree of difficulty experienced varies according to

individuals. At the same time though, an associated pattern emerged which suggests that previous academic background and access to resources, which mainly draw on family linked sources, were significant in defining the students' success or struggle. It is worthy of note that participants with a wealthy background and high levels of support were more likely to perform well compared to those who were less privileged. Primarily, attention has been paid to the various forms of capital and material resources that played a significant role in segmenting the study cohort into four groups. Although the experiences of all participants do differ from one another, this study identified four 'types' of the respondent that were progressing on different trajectories, each distinct from one another.

The study participants reported a variety of experiences in and out of University spaces and analysis indicates that inequality in the experiences, perceptions, and achievements of the study participants were found to be heavily influenced by their social class and resources, that is, forms of capital, which were extracted or inherited from their families. There were considerable differences in participants' preparations, both intellectually and economically, which made them experience and achieve unequally at the individual level. At one end of the scale, participants with privileged backgrounds reported thriving experiences because they were fully prepared, well equipped, and capable of managing the high expectations of educators and University. By contrast, at the other end of the scale, participants were struggling to continue with their education and their lives in the UK, mainly due to the shortcomings in the forms of capitals and a lack of preparation in facing the challenges of performing well in international education. The majority of participants were situated somewhere in between these two extremes, suggesting that the study cohort consists of a mix of students who possess and use their resources and forms of capital differently for their own advantage in order to succeed in British education.

The study developed a four-part typology. Using the differences between participants, based on their social class roots and stock of capitals, four types of students were identified; Highflyers, Realists, Credentialist, and Strugglers. These types of students' experiences in education differed from each other, mainly due to different family roots and the levels of support they could access. The idea of trajectory has been used as a metaphor of social stratification, in the process of education to demonstrate the connection between ongoing experiences and the family roots of south Asian students in the UK. This new insight into the social differences among study participants does suggest that there is biographical and social stratification taking place through British education similar to that identified by Carlson (2013) who explains the social-biographical process in study abroad.

Moreover, participants consider study abroad to be more than just taking part in international education. In this respect, the mobility experiences become vitally important in addition to studying at a British university. As explained in chapters 6 and 8, regardless of the relative background of participants, almost all were inspired by being able to explore life in Britain, the adventure it offers and positive impression of future prospects that it promises; these all influenced their satisfaction and life in the UK. Participants had different life style choices, which were inspired by their unique personal development. This personal account of mobility experiences among South Asian international students is rarely seen in the literature.

The participants were from entirely different backgrounds and took different approaches to capital accumulation. The experiences on which these trajectories were built were actually a true reflection of getting through a familiar (e.g. among Highfliers) or an entirely different educational environment (e.g. among Strugglers) in which the performance demands and expectations were radically different depending on the limits of participants' ability and resources. The experiences observed in the study often portrayed one group of participants in contrast to another. Participants with thriving experiences tended to be privileged students who had been achieving exceptionally well. These students usually had a very competent capital set. Compared to this, the less positive experiences were found to be associated with participants who faced challenges and difficulties and were struggling to continue with their education and their lives in the UK. Given this diversity, participants develop different study abroad trajectories that are hierarchical in relation to each other, with Highflyers being on the top and Strugglers being at the bottom, and each in accordance with the social and family attributes of the participants themselves. The theoretical concept of trajectory has been used as a metaphor to explain the social stratification in the education process and to demonstrate the connection between ongoing experiences and family roots of south Asian students in the UK. Students' social upbringing and family background had a defining role in the developing trajectories that relate to the participants' experiences of their origins and lead them to perceive an outcome from their study abroad that, generally, is dominated by established social dispositions and family attributes. The experiences of participants in the UK have been the building blocks of the trajectories which are also influenced by the participants' own social character.

The students' trajectories were different on personal level mainly due to the variations in capital accumulation strategies of participants e.g. participants with privileges tend to progress without diverting to additional sources of capitals i.e. term-time work, while those

coming from underprivileged background were more likely to accept term-time work as an advantage along with their formal education in the UK. Cultural capital and economic capital, which participants normally drew from family links, had a profound impact in defining trajectories, while social capital had a relatively smaller effect, though this does not mean that social capital did not contribute to their progress. The loss of native contacts and the failure to build up social connections at university often created problems for participants' social life but were not seen as major concerns amongst participants themselves. Despite a few comments on isolation and lonely moments at the start of their academic journeys, students were satisfied with their social life in the UK. British education has helped to distinguish participants by recognising and rewarding individuals' abilities and performances, which match with the expectations of HEIs in the UK. Highflyers found it easier to cope with the demands of British education, whilst those with fewer resources and levels of competence found it harder to overcome the challenges of language, academic writing, and University expectations. In addition, prior knowledge of the western style of education, linguistic efficiency, and personal abilities for delivering on academic tasks was found to be associated with individuals' preparedness, both in terms of education and material resources. In response to difficult transitions through the British education system, and in order to add a practical knowledge of the industry to their class-based learning with, many participants turned to work, assuming that term-time work would provide them with a tangible source of economic capital as well as real time experiences of the global work culture. However, the practical benefits of taking up term-time work in addition to the on going educational commitments seem to affect the participation of working student in wider University life. Students with term-time work commitments seem to limit themselves in classroom activities rather than engaging in University life entirely. It is important to recognise that the study cohort was a collective group of socially different students with unequal social origins. Participants chose a different path to make the best use of their existing capital set to advance capital accumulation to suit their purpose of studying abroad. Conceptually, the actual experiences mediate parental capitals and the (re) production of hybrid capitals as an end product of studying abroad in order to sustain family class relations and bring social class advantages. The unequal experiences at university force individual participants to personalize their strategy to accumulate capitals. In doing so, taking on part time work during term time has been perceived as an additional but independent source of capital from which to benefit that can help to strengthen their appropriate skill set by adopting and developing cultural tastes, attitudes, and western values both at work and in the cultural sphere. The levels of

capital accumulation and personal abilities appeared distorted among the less privileged; consequently, in order to continue with their academic adaptation and learning, many sought to benefit from alternative sources of capital, mainly from term-time work.

**Research Question 3: *In light of their experiences, how do South Asian International Students evaluate the long-term cultural, social, and economic benefits of studying in the UK?***

In terms of perceptions of and expectations from British qualifications, the opinions of participants were quite straightforward. Regardless of the noticeable variation in trajectories and experiences that participants shared in this study, the outcomes of British education, and its products i.e. degrees were largely considered optimistically and thought achievable. Participants were confident in their prospects for securing access to employment in their respective national labour market with the help of the kind of experiences and qualifications they were about to gain. It was clear that the perceived outcomes of studying in the UK were understood in accordance with their career expectations and the social positioning of their families. For example, Highflyers considered that they would ultimately be successful in developing a privileged career or in joining the family business, while others hoped to access their national labour market and secure a good job at the end of their study abroad journey. It seems that the experiences and individual strategies to overcome shortfalls in the relevant capital sets are all part of their aspirations, which are deeply rooted in social recognition and labour market rewards, which come with foreign cultural capital, in this case, their British credentials. In addition to this, the individual strategies that are used to pursue alternative sources of capital and deviation from mainstream sources of capital accumulation were justified and defined by their approach, which enabled them to contribute to their own advantages. As a result, given the diverse backgrounds of participants' study abroad journeys and their associated experiences, this seems to fit best with the social desirability of students to acquire foreign qualifications for an advantage primarily for employment purposes which relate to social positioning. It seems that participants' expectations from their British education have been extended, even beyond the sense of the real competitive labour market.

The majority of participants were found to rely, excessively, on British degrees in order to get a job. This is what Waters (2008) called the 'magical properties of foreign qualifications'. These expectations were much higher among participants with less privileged backgrounds. In addition, the future prospects of British education as a whole were understood to be life changing. It is noticeable that perceptions towards outcomes or the potential use of British education have been understood in connection with parental



occupations or social status. For example, participants with wealthy backgrounds were admired for establishing their own entrepreneurial identity or their willingness to join the family business. In contrast, participants with limited support and fewer privileges perceived themselves as able to obtain decent employment at the end of their studies. The positional advantages of having a British qualification in competing with local graduates seemed obvious to many. In this sense, the distinction based on British education or qualifications is applied to rationalise the perceptions of participants. The instrumental function of British education was perceived as helping participants' enter into socially recognised, well paid, and high-quality employment.

In light of the experiences of participants and the relationship between their experiences and their perceptions and expectations, it is fair to say that perceived outcomes were most certain and precise amongst the most privileged students. This was not the case with less privileged students. Lower profile participants seem to have a broader view of the benefits that they can obtain from their education in the UK, though it was also primarily focused on securing their livelihood rather than aiming for social mobility, as privileged participants tend to do. Despite the variation in experiences, the evidence does not distinguish differing perceptions of outcomes, which, for all participants, centred on achieving positional advantages in the local labour market, which, in turn, are further linked with socially recognised professions. Unlike the growing literature which identifies and focuses on claims of the vulnerable lives of international students in their study destinations (Marginson et al, 2010; Bass, 2010 & 2014; Nyland et al, 2009; Robertson, 2011), the findings of this study portray a different picture of international student life in the UK. Despite media reports, this study does not identify the victimisation of South Asian international students in the UK as a major concern. Instead, it has recorded a satisfied, optimistic vision of study participants, which derives from their perceptions of positive outcomes from British education. The British policy changes to visas had little impact on students' experiences, in particular to those who were willing to seek work opportunities during or after graduation in order to enhance their career prospects at an international level. Yet changes in immigration are perceived to be a barrier to students' access to the international labour market because the reforms tend to reduce possibilities for accessing work in the UK, thus denying them an opportunity which might be a launch pad for to international career.

Following the above, despite the overwhelming satisfaction among the study cohort regarding their University experiences and their belief in promising outcomes of attending

British education, this study witnessed a rising concern of not being able to access international career paths, resulting in return mobility among the majority of participants. The common expectation of going back to the home country was shared by the majority, a finding that fails to match the trajectory that Findlay and others (2012) had proposed. However, this is also a part of an individual trajectory favouring family roots rather than migration but was a cause of concern for a few participants who worried about not being able to access the international labour market in the UK or elsewhere. This does suggest the impact of state control over student migration. However, it did not significantly affect the study cohort as the majority considered that a quality education and individual achievement in the UK turned into currency, which would help them to gain a competitive edge in their domestic labour market. The study does not support the claims that the currency or future prospects of British education has been compromised or tends to decline as credentials inflate. Instead, the sense of being mobile and the perceived value of the culture capital of British education, with the resulting narrative of self, are seen as important assets with value when students return home and embark on careers.

Despite the participants' reluctance to express their views on student visa policy changes and consequently its impact on their experience, as far as this study is concerned, these changes do not have a significant impact apart from the revocation of post-study work opportunity which has become a concern among those who needed work exposure to accomplish their formal learning. However, a worrying concern, which did emerge from the data, relates to the potential for students to access international careers or global professions after completing British education. This has been found to be less probable among almost the entire study cohort mainly due to not having enough opportunities to gain work experiences alongside their formal qualification in the UK. Returning to their local labour market has thus become inevitable. The current student visa regime and changes in the UK have made it quite difficult to acquire work experiences, which are usually considered to be an additional advantage to academic qualifications. This study shows that the career mobility of south Asian international students at international level, however, is being affected by British policy reforms in the student visa regime but it also has demonstrated that the study abroad journey of these students in the UK has been part of their social class trajectories and thus the impact of this policy restriction has little to do with wider life project of South Asian international students. In line with this, mobility experiences do matter because they engendered a sense of being mobile among study participants, making them overwhelmingly satisfied with their study abroad sojourn. Academic experiences are part of the aspirations behind study at a British University yet

students have understood experiences of life beyond university as vital as a defining factor in perceiving a brighter future after completion of the study.

After all, an important finding of this study has been to recognise term-time work engagement as a part of the strategic plan to accumulate capitals, thus work engagement is considered to be positive by those who were able to secure it and many participants chose to work not just to make money but also to gain skills and industry or work-based knowledge, that is, 'soft credentials'. Despite some instances of disappointment relating to term-time work due to its low skilled profile and the mismatch between their field of study and the nature of their current work, satisfaction levels were high in most of the aspects of the work among those who had been doing it. Chapter 7 explains these findings in detail, but it is important to understand that the work was not a source of vulnerability or trauma among this study cohort; instead, it brought financial and linguistic benefits, which helped participants to improve their performances at the university. By opening a new frontier of academic debate, the study extends the scope of learning among South Asian international students beyond university into the informal and cultural based environment. Paid work has become an essential part of this informal learning for South Asian students in the UK, providing new ways to acquire work-based skills, experiences and work culture. Study participants strategically pursue extracurricular advantages or 'soft currencies' and attempt to acquire western ways of taste, attitudes, and appearance to achieve distinction.

A further breakdown of findings reveals that, at the national level, participants' motivations and choices with regard to options for study abroad, engagement in term-time work, return intentions, and their perceptions of outcomes are driven by the opportunities available in their respective countries. As discussed in chapter 4, the national dynamics, including economic growth, the employment situation in the labour market, political unrest, and instability due to war, violence, or ethnic conflicts, have been working for study participants differently and thus seem to affect, individually, participants' motivations to study abroad. Despite this, problems relating to social and economic growth, including poverty, poor funding for higher education, demographic pressure over the education system and lack of quality education for the ever growing student population in the country, were shared by almost all South Asian nations and were common issues repeatedly acknowledged by participants. There were particular issues on a national level, which diversify participants' perceptions and intentions. Therefore, the participants' rationales for choosing study abroad were manifold. As explained earlier, the strong perception of the benefits of a British education and its outcome, a degree to acquire a

competitive edge in the labour market back home, was a common finding as well as a widely shared view among study cohort. Alongside this, those participants coming from small and problematic nations such as Nepal, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka had their own particular reasons for justifying their choice of study abroad.

Evidence presented in Appendix-F suggests that students coming from nations other than large economies such as India or Pakistan, tend to choose ‘escaping home’ as a primary reason to reflect local economic and social pressures and to choose study abroad. Case studies – 02 (Afghanistan), 04, 05, 06, 08, 11 (Bangladesh), 40 (Nepal), and 50 (Sri Lanka) left their home in order to escape the local education system in favour of quality education in Britain. Participants coming from large economies such as India and Pakistan gave a mixed range of responses reflecting differences and inter-state variations, which exist across their societies. For example, southern states in India are much more advanced in education than states in the north, while in Pakistan; society is divided economically and faces radical ethnic forces opposed to the modernisation of education. Social inequality is also a countrywide issue in both India and Pakistan, thus the rationale for choosing study abroad, among participants from these nations, varies individually. By contrast, Bhutan and Sri Lanka present a different scenario in which participants from Bhutan (Case studies, 12 and 13) were privileged, well prepared and had used regional educational opportunities in India prior to their study in the UK. Their background also reflects social class pressure to reproduce class advantages using international education. Students who come from Sri Lanka (Case studies 49 and 51) had to choose study abroad as a second choice due to competition for access to national elite education at home. Their responses gave the impression that the (high) quality local education had become increasingly difficult to access and British education is used as a strategic response to this congestion (See Appendix-F).

When considering the practice of term-time work, the nationality of participants seems to segment the study cohort; participants from small economies rather than those from the larger South Asian nations, tended to choose term-time work. As explained, Table – 6, participant case studies 01, 02 (Afghanistan), 04, 05, 06, 08, 09 (Bangladesh), 12 (Bhutan), 16, 21, 22, 25, 33 (India), 47 (Pakistan) were engaged in term-time work for financial reasons, while participants case studies 10 (Bangladesh), 19, 32, 34, 35 (India), 40 (Nepal), 42, 48 (Pakistan) were working with a positive perception that they were improving their skill set as well as gaining financial independence. A similar pattern could be drawn based on participants return intentions and future plans. Evidence presented in Figure 17

suggests that students choosing to migrate (Case studies-18, 25, 32) or become entrepreneurs (Case studies-14, 19, 30, 33, 35) were all Indian, while those choosing to continue studying were from Bangladesh (Case studies- 04, 05, and 06), Bhutan (Case study 12) India (17, 26, and 31), and SriLanka (49). Many of these participants were strategically using the further study as an option to avoid an early return home. The rest of study cohort, reluctantly, chose to work back home after completing their education. In addition, participants expressed anxieties towards the use of their degrees back home and the viability of the capitals they had accumulated in the UK. This was particularly intense among those participants who were aware of the labour markets' weaknesses and were worried about the lack of work opportunities back home. Many of these participants were from small and problematic nations e.g. Case studies- 01, 02 (Afghanistan), 03, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11 (Bangladesh), 40 (Nepal), 50, and 51 (SriLanka). Compared to them, other participants (i.e. India and Pakistan) were confident in making use of their educational achievements and securing positional advantages.

Following this discussion, the diversity in the national and social dynamics of South Asia in which participants intend to utilise their study abroad achievements, i.e. British degrees, become important because the local labour markets of the nations in South Asia vary in terms of job availability, the nature of jobs, the level of economic return (salaries) of the cohort's heavy investment in education. The prospects for participants, deriving from an international education, rely primarily on the economic, political, and social spaces of the country in which the viability of foreign education can be achieved. Apparently, it is particularly challenging in countries where political instability, ethnic violence and conflict are affecting national life, and as a result, migration of both labour and skilled worker becomes a part of the culture, as it has, for example, in Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan and SriLanka. In contrast, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh represent relatively stable democracies, and bigger economies able to support better employment prospects and opportunities to work in multinational companies. Because of this complexity, it becomes difficult to say conclusively how a heterogeneous international student group might utilise their study abroad achievements. This could be fertile ground for further research.

### 9.3- THE ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The original contribution of this research has been to advance the scholarship of the sociology of education by discovering the processes of social reproduction among South Asian international students, through British education. In doing so, the research

contributes theoretically and empirically to our existing knowledge of student mobility, migration, and social reproduction in South Asia by explaining the ways in which students and their families pursue and use British higher education strategically, to reproduce social class advantages and therefore seek to achieve distinction (Bourdieu, 1986). As explained by Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), forms of capitals (i.e. embodied and institutional forms of culture capital) have been used by middle-class families to gain positional advantages in the labour market. Bourdieu's theoretical insight into the role of social class difference in reproducing inequalities in academic attainments has been used to explain how the arbitrary culture of schools in a meritocratic society reward students with the attitudes, knowledge, and taste of the dominant class, compared to those from the working class, who could not demonstrate such attributes (Sullivan, 2001 & 2002; Nash, 1990). In such an educational process, academic rewards legitimise social inequality by misrecognising social class attributes and interpreting them as the personal abilities and talents of students in schooling and, as a result, disadvantage those who could not demonstrate the appropriate dispositions. By taking advantage of Bourdieu's vision, scholars (i.e. Marginson, 2008 and Findlay et.al. 2012) have been trying to examine the relationship between globalising higher education, student mobility, and migration. In doing so, they found that international education has been strategically used by families, both in developed (Murphy-Lejeune, 2003; Carlson, 2013; Brooks and Waters, 2009a; 2009b; 2011a and 2011b) and developing nations (Waters, 2008; Sin, 2013b; Leung, 2013; Leung and Waters, 2013), to reproduce social class privileges by gaining positional advantages in the labour market. In providing evidence to strengthen this theory, the strategic use of international education among Chinese (e.g. Xue, 2008; Leung, 2013; Waters, 2008) and Malaysian students (Sin, 2009 and 2013b) is discussed to explain how middle-class families in Asia seek to reproduce class advantages. However, international student mobility in South Asia has not been theorised, despite its huge contribution to the international student population. The contribution of this study has been to understand the perceptions and aspirations of students and their families in South Asia to reproduce social class privileges by using British educational achievements and degrees. The quality of British education and employability of a British degree have been widely accepted as reasons to choose study in the UK. The international credentials (British degrees) and embodied culture capital (language, transferable skills, taste, and attitudes) have been understood as currencies through which to gain positional advantages in the labour market. However, the mode of reproduction among the study cohort has been unequal due to the variations in capital accumulation strategies and the social-biographical differences

between students who appear to develop diverse trajectories based on the disparity in their stock of capitals. This social reproduction among South Asian students through British education has a different nature from that we have seen in other communities in Asia (i.e. Chinese). The study has been able to explore the heterogeneity of a student population coming from diverse social-cultural backgrounds and family dynamics in South Asia, while scholars such as Waters (2008) seem to overlook the important differences resulting from the social class and personal biographies of students i.e. among Chinese. To reflect the role of such differences in the education process, this study contributes by developing a typology consisting four types of participants (Highflier, Realist, Credentialist, and Struggler), and corresponding students' personal trajectories representing their capital accumulation strategies. This dynamic and multi-dimensional operationalization of forms of capital is important as it allows us to demonstrate the individual differences between students' progress through British higher education as well as recognise their likely outcomes based on the type of experiences they have, which in turn, depends on the stock of capitals and their capital accumulation strategies both in and out of University spaces.

The study contributes by offering an insight into the 'arbitrary culture' of British higher education which tends to benefit privileged students as they are able to adapt and achieve in English education more than less privileged students who reported many difficulties in their educational transitions in the UK. Scholars seem to present these difficulties superficially in terms of stress, health, lack of critical thinking and so on. Instead, it is the high expectations of British education, which requires students to achieve at least equally to other European or British students who have been educated in excellent education throughout their life in developed nations. Scholars thus disregard the social and cultural differences that exist within the international student body. As a result, the experiences of study participants vary, representing the different trajectories of achievements and unequal outcomes for the different types of students identified by this study. Similarly, Waters (2002, 2003, 2005, 2006b) particularly has discussed family aspirations and strategies of social reproduction among Chinese community through migration of entire family with students to the destination country. This research also explored study abroad among south Asian students as a family project through which social reproduction of achievement back home rather than in destination country was important. In this regard, the study contributes by recognising four types of families (International, entrepreneurial, establish middle class and emerging middle class) and their material-emotional investments in students to prepare them well, academically, before approaching international education. These early transfers of capitals from parents to students had a defining role in the success or failure of students

in British education. Students with privileges joined British education with a prior knowledge of Western thoughts and ways of learning, with English language, and an abundance of economic and social capital that made their academic transition in British education easy, while shortcomings in family resources and support put an additional burden on other students who faced significant challenges in British education. Such disparities in embodied and other forms of capital among students lead them to create diverse trajectories of achievement in British education. In this way, privileged families of participants deploy their strategies to mobilise and transfer family based capitals to students from very early on, which prepares them for an effortless transition into international education. In contrast, students with less privileged backgrounds tend to have difficulties in such transitions due to shortcomings in their family based resources and investments which thus drives their progress in education quite differently from their privileged counterparts. Thus, the role of families in preparing students for success in international education has been observed, which makes study abroad a family project to achieve social distinction, not only for students but for their families too. Such family strategies also influence the return intentions and future pathways of participants. A majority of students with middle-class backgrounds are perceived to make use of their academic achievements i.e. British credentials, in gaining positional advantages in the labour market back home while students with families having their own businesses tend to advance family entrepreneurship to draw social reputation and the skills accrued in education upon themselves and their families. The social distinction is assumed to be achieved, for many participants, upon return to their home country (Figure-17) while some chose to continue studying abroad for further academic excellence and a privileged few (i.e. Highfliers) desired to pursue a career in international companies. In all cases, whether it is Highflier or Struggler, the advantages of a British education have been accepted as outweighing the difficult experiences one may have and contributed to a sense of overwhelming satisfaction among the study cohort. This finding adds a new dimension to the academic discourse and debate around student migration and immigration politics in developed nations i.e. in the UK. This is discussed later.

Moving beyond the family strategies in social reproduction, this study contributes by widening the scale and scope of the debate surrounding students' experiences through the lens of a mobility and biographical perspective. Up until now, the focus of academic investigations to understand student mobility from South Asia has been limited to established migration theories while the mobility aspects of South Asian international students' experiences were hardly discussed. The contribution of this study has been to



address this lacuna by highlighting students' emotional attachment to their study abroad project, presented in the study as the 'London dream,' and personal efforts to make use of mobility experiences to become independent. In doing so, beyond any family support, many participants seek to engage in term-time work in pursuit of economic independence, as well as exploring work-based skills, experiences, and knowledge alongside their education, which could help them enhance their employability. This has been a part of their youth transitions from study to work rather than simply an act of earning money. As shown by Waters (2010), Waters and Leung (2012, 2013a & 2013b) international education and its products i.e. degrees, do not, by themselves, always produce advantages. The lack of mobility experiences among students in Hong Kong who acquired their British degree at home resulted in disadvantages. Using a mobility perspective, scholars have examined personal adventure, life exploration (Crivello, 2011), and the efforts that enhance students' own abilities (Root and Ngampornchai, 2013) and perceptions of employability (Li, 2013; Devadason, 2007), which helps them become independent (Leung, 2013; Carlson, 2011) and emerge as talented (Mosneaga and Winther, 2013). Such mobility dimensions of study abroad, among South Asian international students, have not been discussed but they are equally important because mobility experiences are important to the individual in pursuit of an academic distinction without which the currency of international credentials may be affected. The study highlights that a sense of mobility and achievement among South Asian students in British education had a positive impact on students' perceptions of the outcomes of their British education and the degree of perceived satisfaction with their education and other aspects of student life in the UK. This is a rare insight reflecting a positive perception towards international students' life in the UK, which is different from findings that present students' transition as a difficult process and quite the opposite of what we have observed in Australia where Indian students were projected as vulnerable, and victims of abuse and crime.

The research contributes, substantially, to the discussion of migration in South Asia by revealing; trends of 'step migration' as part of student migration in South Asia, return mobility among students to address the changing nature of student migration in south Asia, the 'heterogeneous nature' of the student population originating from South Asia and by evaluating students' perceptions towards immigration reforms in the UK and their likely effects on their lives and prospects of their British education. Our current understanding of student migration in and from South Asia has been limited to migration theories, which regard student migration as part of the skilled migration and 'brain-drain' in South Asia. South Asia as a region has been constantly sending students to pursue quality education

worldwide and has been a major source of international students in the UK. Despite such a strong and consistent supply of students, there has been very little attention to their experiences, particularly with regard to their choices and motivations to attend a British University. In addition, what we know has been overwhelmed by studies explaining either, abuse and security issues among Indian students in Australia (Marginson et.al. 2010; Bass, 2006, 2009 and 2014; Robertson, 2011; Blunt, 2007;), racialisation in New Zealand (Collins, 2006) or warning over international students being targeted by immigration policies including in the UK (Kim and Sondhi, 2015; Brown and Jones, 2011; Blinder, 2011). Scholars (e.g. Raghuram, 2013; King and Raghuram, 2013; Asis, Piper and Raghuram, 2010) have been trying to theorise student migration and invite more empirical investigations to do so. This study contributes to this discussion by explaining the social class process in education, among South Asian international students, to secure class advantages in the labour market and in helping to theorise student migration as discussed earlier. With a particular focus on variations in social-cultural dynamics of societies in South Asia, the study contributes by suggesting heterogeneity in the student population, something which previously, has been overlooked. Findings indicate that factors associated with study abroad decisions cannot be presented as homogeneous in the social-culturally diverse region of South Asia. The migration experiences and aspirations behind moving abroad to study and settle elsewhere involve personal biographies and social class processes which exhibit very personal accounts and need to be recognised in scholars' attempt to understand the migration process. So far, this has not received enough attention in academic discourse and this study contributes by explaining the ways in which migration to study is experienced by students individually and used strategically to enhance livelihood options either by going back home or elsewhere. In this debate, the 'return mobility' among South Asian international students has been a significant finding and contribution of this study as it provides evidence of the changing dynamics of student migration in South Asia where the majority of participants chose to return home rather than seek a way to settle in the UK, or indeed, elsewhere. This finding is in stark contrast to the dominant view, which still considers student mobility as part of a skilled migration or a type of brain drain in South Asia. In addition, studies of migration experiences in destinations like Australia have been found problematic and raised many questions of security, well-being and vulnerability of students from countries in South Asia i.e. India. In contrast, this study contributes to a better understanding of the personal experiences of migration and mobility together making, showing students' perceptions to be optimistic towards the outcomes of their education in the UK, regardless of the variations in their

personal experiences. This insight into the migration-mobility nexus among the study cohort in the UK demonstrates a departure from students' intention to migrate and their inclination to become mobile. To some extent, the changing immigration policy in the UK may be responsible for creating such intentions, yet students willingly pursue positional advantages back home rather than through migration. In this respect, the study contributes to understanding the students' perception towards changing immigration policies in the UK and its impact on their lives in the UK and the outcomes of their study in the UK. The findings reject the claims of the life of international students becoming problematic in the UK and provide evidence to suggest that the majority of the study cohort has been largely satisfied, confident of optimistic outcomes from their education and consider immigration reforms irrelevant to them, except in the case of a small number who expressed concerns over the restriction on work opportunities during and after their study in the UK. The study has investigated such concerns and contributes to current knowledge by revealing that the true nature of students' sense of insecurity stems from their perception of uncertainties in making use of their skills and academic achievements in future. This is in stark contrast to the idea of being part of a Precariat put forward by Standing (2011).

The study contributes significantly and originally to our current understanding of regional student mobility trends in South Asia. Due to lack of data, our knowledge of regional cooperation and facilitation in shaping international mobility trends within the region has been very limited and the majority of studies draw their conclusions from statistical information at the regional level. This study contributes by investigating national level literature and the empirical findings uncover a regional trend of 'Step migration' within South Asia. Using regional educational opportunities i.e. Indian education, students from neighbouring countries in South Asia seek to prepare themselves for their higher education in western destinations. In this respect, the role of India as a stepping-stone in facilitating student mobility, locally and internationally, has been underlined. Previously, the regional trends of student migration in South Asia had been presented superficially in the literature without paying enough attention to the student mobility trends at the national level. This study contributes by providing empirical evidence for the first time, to reveal 'Step-migration' in South Asia and regional cooperation between countries to take advantage of the growing knowledge economy in the region.

#### 9.4- LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The findings of this research have certain limitations, mainly due to the methodology of the study. The study used a non-probability sampling method due to lack of information regarding the total size of the study population, which limits the scope of the results in terms of its wider generalisation. In addition, the sample disproportionately consists of students from major south Asian countries e.g. India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Small countries in South Asia i.e. Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan, and Maldives, are not included in significant numbers thus, findings of the study could not be applied equally to all nations in South Asia. The role of the survey has been exploratory only. The presentation of survey and interview data lacks a high level of integration in presenting results. Furthermore, the survey data gathered are nominal and ordinal in nature, which does not allow the use of a robust type of statistical tests. Therefore, a particular test i.e. Chi square test has been used to find an association in responses and is presented where appropriate, to support qualitative findings. Despite these limitations, the findings of this study have been largely based on a structured survey and qualitative interviews and follow a widely used mixed method employing snowball sampling to enrol participants. The sample size was large enough to provide answers to the research questions, overcome methodological bias and any validity issues that might otherwise have affected the findings. In light of these strengths, the study provides a new insight into the experiences of South Asian international students in the UK to contribute to a better understanding of the wider sociological debates regarding student mobility, education, and employment among South Asian students in the UK.

#### 9.5- RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The research makes a recommendation for further study into the viability and value of foreign culture capital in the south Asian domestic labour market and how British credentials are being used to (re) produce class advantages. Less information is presented about the voice of family aspirations despite their active and inevitable role in study abroad decisions and it is still unclear how families actually benefit from the study abroad achievements of their children. The gendered experiences of south Asian student migration in the UK are not significantly clearer following this study and, as discussed by Sondhi (2013), there is an urgent need to explore this lacuna in the literature as gender plays a bigger role in study abroad experiences and student mobilities than is currently recognised.

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## APPENDICES

### (A) PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

#### MOBILITY, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT AMONGST SOUTH ASIAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE UK

Dear South Asian International Student

I am Dwarka Nayak, studying at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge as a PhD (Sociology) research student. The purpose of my research is to understand the experiences of South Asian international students in the UK. In doing so, this research seeks to recruit international students from South Asian countries including Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Maldives. International students from above nations studying at a selected Post-1992 University in London are eligible and most welcome to take part in the research. These universities are the University of Westminster, University of Arts London, University of East London, University of West London, Middlesex University, London Metropolitan University, Roehampton University, University of Greenwich, and London South Bank University.

This study consists of a structured online survey and a semi-structured interview. It involves two stages to gather data. First, is the online survey and second, the interview. Anyone who wishes to take part has to participate in the online survey before appearing in an interview and provide their interest to take part in following interview for which they will be entitled to get £20 for their valuable time and information. The online survey takes about 20-25 minutes to complete, and an in-depth interview takes about 30-45 minutes.

There is no known mental or physical health risk or well-being issue of participants involved in this study. However, the participant will have a right to withdraw from being a part of this research at any time without explanation. To safeguard your data, your response in the study will be treated with confidentiality, kept safely, anonymised and will be destroyed after completion of this study. No individual participant will be either identified or identifiable in the research publication.

Name of Investigator: Dwarka Nayak

For further information about this study, you may contact my supervisors, Dr David Skinner, Dr Shaun Le Boutillier, Dr Deborah Holman and their contact details are-

(YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS TO KEEP, TOGETHER WITH A COPY OF YOUR  
CONSENT FORM)



## (B)- PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

### MOBILITY, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT AMONGST SOUTH ASIAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE UK

- 1- I have read the study information attached with this form and agree to take part in this research titled above.
- 2- The information I am providing in this research is my statements, experiences and opinions, which do not relate or influenced by either researcher or any other party.
- 3- I understand my role and responsibility in the research and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.
- 4- I am aware of the use of information that I will be providing and that the information will be treated with confidence and safeguarded under the data protection act 1998.
- 5- I understand that my statements will be anonymised, kept safely and destroyed once will be finished and that my statements will be presented with anonymity in any publication of this study.
- 6- I confirm that have received a copy of consent and study information to use in future.

Data Protection: I agree to the University<sup>52</sup> processing personal data which I have supplied. I accept the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the Research Project as outlined to me\*

Name of participant-----Signature-----Date-----

Investigator: Dwarka Nayak                      Signature-----Date-----

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP

-----  
If you wish to withdraw from the research, please complete the form below and send it to Mr Dwarka Nayak

I want to withdraw from the study titled: Mobility, Education, and Employment amongst South Asian International students in the UK

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>52</sup> "The University" includes Anglia Ruskin University and its partner colleges

## **(C)- QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **MOBILITY, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT AMONGST SOUTH ASIAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE UK**

#### **(A)-Personal background and Family attributes-**

1- Could you please introduce yourself?

Prompts:

Name, age, gender, nationality, subject, and level of study, university and campus details, and time spent in the UK, when to finish studying.

2- Could you tell me about your social, economic and family background?

Prompts:

Language, family size, the source of family income, parental education and occupation, role and responsibility in the family, previous education and employment experiences back home.

#### **(B)-Aim and experiences of cross-border mobility in education**

3- What were the main motivations for you to decide to study abroad and why the UK in particular?

Prompts:

Pull factors: adventures of living or studying abroad, linguistic competence, term-time work opportunities, specific subject programme, quality education at a British university, the reputation and ranking of the university, access to an international job, employability of degree, affordability and social mobility through western education.

Push factors: lack of quality education, competition for access to national elite education, lack of study programs, traditional ways of teaching, learning culture and environment, the social-economic situation of the home country and the mismatch between the demand for the labour market and educational outcomes.

4- How did you decide to pursue an education in the UK and how did you prepare to get to the UK?

Prompts:

Decision-making, personal drive, family input and desires, University support services and agents, experiences of immigration to the UK.

#### **(C)-Educational experiences and achievements in the UK**

5- What are the best aspects and the challenges of student life at a British university here for you?

Prompts:

Experiences in a multicultural class environment, pedagogic practices, style of learning and teaching, group learning, content of course, tutor support and assessment, relationships with classmates and tutors, academic achievements and failure, satisfaction from academic life, participation in classroom activities and extracurricular university life, socialization, difficulties and discrimination during education in the UK.

6- What comparative advantage you are getting from British education than your own?

Prompts:

Technical side of the education, access to research and knowledge database, industry engagement, multicultural class environment, unconventional contents and subjects

7- What are your experiences of university support services and facilities designed to help you progress?

Prompts:

The use of services, access to academic support, e.g. lecturer, employability and skills support events, employment bureau, international student support, career services, library and canteen, accommodation and student union.

8- What did you find beneficial in British education and whether it meets your expectations?

Prompts:

The Labour market interactive study, education-industry collaboration, practice-based study, quality education, employability of British credentials.

9- Do you value your degree and the experiences you are having as an international student?

Prompts:

If yes- to what extent, if no why?

10- Would you recommend British education to friends, colleagues, and family members?

Prompts:

If yes- to what extent, if no why?

11- How satisfied are you with the experiences at university?

**(D)-Term-time employment and its significance or consequences**

12- Have you worked at some point in the UK since your arrival?

Prompts:-

Yes- how did you get it, type and nature of the job, pay, work-study balance, discrimination at work, relationships with colleagues, skills improvement, visa limitations, job satisfaction, job and other insecurities, opportunities to learn as you earn, benefits of term-time work e.g. work experiences.

No- reasons, barriers to access paid work, lack of support, how do you support living here?

13- What support do you have here to get a term time job or work experiences in the UK?

Prompts:

Employment agencies, university employment bureau, University staff, friends and classmates in the UK.

14- What are/ were the work conditions that you face or experience during term-time work?

Prompts:

Job availability, fair selection procedure, work contracts, awareness about rights, equal opportunities at work, appropriate working conditions, employment benefits, paid holiday, opportunity for training, skills development, health and safety at work

15- How easy or difficult is to develop a career and an Occupational identity in the world of work after finishing British qualification?

### **(E)-Student visa reforms and Immigration scenario**

16- What is your opinion about recent student immigration reforms in the UK?

Prompts:

Immigration abuse and control, advantages and disadvantages of the last few reforms, limiting rights e.g. work or dependents, constantly changing visa rules, fewer opportunities to remain in the UK, post-study work options (PSW), politics around EU and non-EU student immigration

### **(F)-Future prospect**

17- What is your long-term plan beyond University?

Prompts:

Returning home to work or study, staying in the UK for further study or employment, immigration to elsewhere, other plans e.g. business

18- How would you manage to secure a decent employment with British qualification?

19- Please give your opinion about-

Future outcomes of British education for you, employability scenario after completing British education, the contribution of British higher education and term time employment in your life.

Thanks

## (D) ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

### MOBILITY, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT AMONGST SOUTH ASIAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE UK

#### Participant information and consent

This questionnaire applies only to international students from South Asian countries<sup>53</sup> and studying at a post-1992 University<sup>54</sup> in London.

Dear International Student

I am Dwarka Nayak, a PhD research student at Anglia Ruskin University. This survey is a part of my research project aimed to investigate the experiences of South Asian International students in the UK. The following survey you will be given an opportunity to take part in an interview for which you will get £20. Survey and interview are part of the research. This questionnaire will take about 20-25 minutes to complete.

Your responses will be treated strictly confidential, anonymised and will be destroyed after completion of this study. All information collected via survey will be coded and held in an anonymised form. No individual participant or University will be either identified or identifiable in the research publication. However, there are no known risks involved in this study, which may affect you. You still may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation.

Please contact for more details on

Q1- Are you ready to give your consent and wish to continue with this study? (Compulsory question)

- I have read the research information and agreed to continue.
  - I understand the purpose of the research study and my involvement in it.
  - I understand that I may withdraw from the research study at any time.
  - I understand that the information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my responses will remain confidential.
  - I understand that my data will be stored securely by the researcher, with only the researcher and his supervisors to have access to it for the use of this study only.
  - I understand that I may contact the researcher or his supervisors if I require further information about the research.
  - The completion of this questionnaire implies my consent to participate in all aspects of the study, including interview and social networking data.
- ☐ Yes, I have read all the details, and I agree to take part in the survey and interview.

<sup>53</sup> Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka.

<sup>54</sup> University of Westminster, University of East London, University of West London, University of Greenwich, London South Bank University, Roehampton University, Middlesex University, University of Arts London, and London Metropolitan University

## PERSONAL INFORMATION

Q 2- What is your nationality?

- |                                      |                                     |                                   |                                    |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Afghanistan | <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladesh | <input type="checkbox"/> Bhutan   | <input type="checkbox"/> India     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nepal       | <input type="checkbox"/> Maldives   | <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistan | <input type="checkbox"/> Sri Lanka |

Q 3- Which category describe below includes your age and gender?

- Age group-**      ☐ Less than 20      ☐ 21-23      ☐ 24-26      ☐ 27-29  
                          ☐ 30-32      ☐ 33-35      ☐ more than 35
- Gender-**      ☐ Male      ☐ Female

Q 4- What is the highest level of education you have already completed?

- Qualification-**      ☐ Bachelor or below      ☐ Master or above
- Medium of education-**      ☐ English language      ☐ Native language
- Other (please specify)**

Q 5- Which of the following best describes your work experience prior coming to the UK?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I had a permanent job            | <input type="checkbox"/> I had a part time job |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I was engaged in family business | <input type="checkbox"/> I did not work        |

**Other (please specify)**

Q 6- Which of the following best describes your parents' education and occupation?

- |                |   |  |
|----------------|---|--|
| <b>Father-</b> | <b>Level of Education-</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Below Bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor<br><input type="checkbox"/> Masters <input type="checkbox"/> Above Masters |  |
|                | <b>Occupation-</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Business and Management<br><input type="checkbox"/> Science and Technology<br><input type="checkbox"/> Unspecified Profession       |  |

**Other (please specify)**

- |                |   |  |
|----------------|---|--|
| <b>Mother-</b> | <b>Level of Education-</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Below Bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor<br><input type="checkbox"/> Masters <input type="checkbox"/> Above Masters |  |
|                | <b>Occupation-</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Business and Management<br><input type="checkbox"/> Science and Technology<br><input type="checkbox"/> Unspecified Profession       |  |

**Other and Housewife (please specify)**

Q 7- What is approximate 'monthly' household income of your family back home?<sup>55</sup>

- ☐ Less than £500    ☐ £500-999    ☐ £1000-1499`    ☐ More than 1500

Q 8- About how long have you lived in the UK?

- ☐ Less than 6 months    ☐ 6 months -1 years  
☐ 1-2 years    ☐ 2-3 year    ☐ More than 3 years

Q 9- Which of the following contributes to your living in the UK? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Scholarship /Sponsorship /Bursary    ☐ Bank or other loan  
☐ Employer from home country    ☐ Family/Relatives  
☐ My savings and paid employment in the UK

Other (please specify)

### EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND EXPECTATIONS

Q 10- What is the name of your University?

- ☐ University of Westminster    ☐ University of East London  
☐ University of West London    ☐ University of Greenwich  
☐ London South Bank University    ☐ Roehampton University  
☐ Middlesex University    ☐ University of Arts London  
☐ London Metropolitan University

Q 11- What are the level and main subject of your study in the UK?

**Level of study-**

- ☐ Undergraduate    ☐ PG Taught    ☐ PG Research

**Subject of study-**

- ☐ Business and Management    ☐ Science and Technology    ☐ Arts and Humanities

Other (Please specify)

Q 12- Which of the following contributes to your academic fee in the UK? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Scholarship /Sponsorship /Bursary    ☐ Bank or other loan  
☐ Employer from home country    ☐ Family/Relatives  
☐ My savings and paid employment in the UK

Other (please specify)

<sup>55</sup> The question originally asked in native currency and different figures which later converted and categorised into GBP for analysis purposes.

Q 13- Tell us about your activities in the classroom or the University. (Tick one option)

Statement	Completely true	Partially true	False	Do not know
I am regularly attending my course work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I work hard to get most of my studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am performing better than other students in the class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am participating in all activities in the class /university	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a better relationship with tutors /supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a better relationship with friends from other countries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

Q 14- Which describes best your academic performance in the classroom or the University?

☐ Underachiever

☐ Average student

☐ More than average

☐ Excellent student

☐ Do not know

Other (please specify)

Q 15- What are the factors affecting your performance at the university? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Language difficulties

☐ Work engagement during the study

☐ Weak social network or social life

☐ Family problems

☐ Financial problems

☐ Health issues

☐ Problems with classmates or staff

☐ Less support from University

☐ Cultural and religious issues

Other (please specify)

Q 16- To what extent do you feel that you have adjusted to life and academic study in the UK?

Statement	A lot	To some extent	Not much
Adjusted to life in the UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adjusted to academic study at my British university	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Q 17- How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your study in the UK?

Aspects	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Content of course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relevance to further career	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Special attention to international students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education fee and related expenses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of class environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of lectures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value for money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall study experiences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 18- How useful have you found the following support services from your University?

University Services	Very Useful	Useful	Neither Useful nor Useless	Useless	Very Useless
Canteen and Catering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accommodation services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social events at University	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Union	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overseas student support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religious services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Study skills support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career advice services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Library	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clubs and societies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall experience of services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 19- To what extent do you consider your period of study abroad worthwhile with regards to the following?

Aspects	Extremely worthwhile	Worthwhile	Neither worthwhile nor worthless	Worthless	Extremely worthless
Maturity and personal development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enhancement of academic knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New ways of exploring life, career, discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing an international career	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enhancing current and Future employability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foreign language proficiency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
International exposure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improvement in career prospect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 20- To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your study in the UK?

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
It is hard to work with UK students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am worried about failing my exam	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am not sure where to get academic support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am concerned about my relationship with my lecturers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel uncomfortable speaking up in academic discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel uncomfortable joining in small group discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A degree is not enough' to get better employment in the labour market	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interpersonal skills and work experiences is vital to add value to qualification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My British degree has employment prospect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I value my British education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would recommend studying in the UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 21- What are the POSITIVE influences on your study and student life so far. (Tick all that apply)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The support of my parents/relatives | <input type="checkbox"/> Support of my friends here    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The support of my friends back home | <input type="checkbox"/> Support of my partner/ spouse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Living conditions                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Support of University tutors  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-determination and hard work    | <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfying course contents    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to resources at University   | <input type="checkbox"/> Social support at University  |

Other (please specify)

Q 22- What are the NEGATIVE influences on your study and student life so far?(Tick all that apply)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of close friends                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of a happy social life    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worrying about family back home          | <input type="checkbox"/> My poor time management        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of learning resources at University | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of support from tutors    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of social support at the University | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfying living conditions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student drinking and clubbing culture    |   |

Other (please specify)

### MOBILITY AND IMMIGRATION EXPERIENCES

Q 23- Why did you choose to study abroad? (Please tick all that apply)

- ☐ Lack of study opportunity back home
- ☐ Influence of family and friends
- ☐ Better employability of western education
- ☐ To maintain social status in society
- ☐ Study abroad now become an affordable
- ☐ Work opportunity during and after the study
- ☐ Competition to get into best institutions back home
- ☐ Easy access to information on study abroad than before
- ☐ Political, economic situation in my country

Other (please specify)

Q 24- What is the main purpose(s) to choose the UK as a study destination? (Please tick all that apply)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> To improve the English language | <input type="checkbox"/> To learn about British culture      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To obtain a British credential  | <input type="checkbox"/> To improve my career prospects      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To gain personal independence   | <input type="checkbox"/> To pursue my interest area of study |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To broaden my life experiences  |  |

Other (please specify)

Q 25- Which of the following influenced your decision to study in the UK? (Please tick all that apply)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parents'/relatives' decision      | <input type="checkbox"/> Advice from my school                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advice from sponsor/employer      | <input type="checkbox"/> Advice from friends studied abroad     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I always wanted to                | <input type="checkbox"/> Reputation of British higher education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Encouragement by agents           | <input type="checkbox"/> Work opportunities during study        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work opportunities after study    | <input type="checkbox"/> Possibility to settle in the UK        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employability of UK qualification | <input type="checkbox"/> Value for money                        |

Other (please specify)

Q 26- What are the difficulties that you have faced during your study in the UK? (Tick all that apply)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial problems                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Finding paid work                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work study balance                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious needs                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Food                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health issues                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration issues                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English language- social and practical use | <input type="checkbox"/> English language- academic use       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homesickness / Loneliness / Isolation      | <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption of western culture          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adjustment with western education          | <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment, exams, class environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relationship with lecturers and classmates | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of University support           |

Other (please specify)

Q 27- Do these difficulties had/have a negative effect on your study or student life in the UK?

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Can not say      Other (specify)

Q 28- What benefits you are receiving from the UK? (Please tick all that apply)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Schooling for dependent  | <input type="checkbox"/> Student discount facilities               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other community benefits | <input type="checkbox"/> University grant or scholarship in the UK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> UK credit facilities     | <input type="checkbox"/> Tax benefits during job                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Free medical care        | <input type="checkbox"/> Council tax benefits                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefits at work         |  |

Other (please specify)

Q 29- How welcoming is the UK immigration system towards South Asian Students? Give your opinion on statements given below?

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am worried about my Immigration status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am not sure where to get help for visa issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
UK immigration changes have increased difficulties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My immigration status has an adverse effect on my academic progress in the UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My immigration status has an adverse effect on work opportunities in the UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gaining student visa has now become difficult and expensive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 30- What is your plan after completing your study in the UK? (Please tick all that apply)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Will go another country to work     | <input type="checkbox"/> Will go another country to study |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Continue studying in the UK for job | <input type="checkbox"/> Will try to settle abroad        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Go back to my country to study      | <input type="checkbox"/> Go back to my homeland to work   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do not know / not sure              |   |

Other (please specify)

## EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES AND EXPECTATIONS

Q 31- Are you in paid work?

- ☐ Yes - Go to Q 33
- ☐ Not working now, but did before and wished to
- ☐ Not working now, but did before and do not wish to
- ☐ Never work but wish to -Go to Q45
- ☐ Never work and do not wish to -Go to Q45

Other (please specify)

Q 32- If not working now, how long have you been without a job in the UK?

- ☐ Less than 1 month
- ☐ 1-6 Months
- ☐ 7-12 Months
- ☐ More than 1 year

Other (please specify)

Q 33- Why do/did you have to work? (Please tick all that apply)

- ☐ To repay education loans
- ☐ Just for fun
- ☐ To save money for future
- ☐ To support living expenses in the UK
- ☐ To spend on socialisation
- ☐ To support family in the home country
- ☐ To support academic fee
- ☐ To add value in skills via work experiences

Other (please specify)

Q 34- Which of the following best describes your current occupation and its nature? <sup>56</sup>

- Type of work- ☐ Regular ☐ Irregular
- Nature of Occupation ☐ Skilled or professional ☐ Unskilled/non-professional

Other (please specify)

Q35- How did you get this job? (Please tick all that apply)

- ☐ Through Friends
- ☐ Jobcentre Plus
- ☐ University Employment Bureau
- ☐ Direct contact to employer
- ☐ Job fair and other events
- ☐ Employment agencies

Other (please specify)

<sup>56</sup> Originally the question had many specific options which later brought down to broader distinction for analysis purpose and to comply with the assumption of SPSS tests.

Q36- In a typical week, about how many hours do you work?

- ☐ Less than 10 hours
 ☐ 11-15 hours  
☐ 16-20 hours
 ☐ 21-25 hours  
☐ 26-30 hours
 ☐ More than 31 hours

Q 37- How well are you paid for the work you do?

- ☐ Extremely well
 ☐ Very well  
☐ Moderately well
 ☐ slightly well  
☐ Not at all well

Q 38- What is your approximate 'weekly' household (you and dependents) income in the UK?

- ☐ Less than £50
 ☐ £51 - £100
 ☐ £101 - £150  
☐ £151 - £200
 ☐ £201 - £250
 ☐ above £251

Q 39- Do you have sufficient income/funds to support your study and living continuously in the UK?

- ☐ Yes, and I hope that will continue
 ☐ Yes, but no hope that will continue  
☐ Don't have sufficient income
 ☐ No hope at all

Other (please specify)

Q 40-Overall how satisfied you are with the following aspects of your term-time work in the UK?

Aspects	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Nature of work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Term and conditions of work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rates of Pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and safety / Working conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The skill level at which you work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities at work to enhance skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities for training and exposure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The way you are treated by your employer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The way you are treated by work colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Voice at work against exploitation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

Q 41- Do you feel that you are satisfied with working in a respectable occupation?

☐ Yes and satisfied with

☐ Yes, but not completely

☐ Not now, but maybe in future

☐ Not satisfied with

☐ Do not know

Other (please specify)

Q 42- Do you feel that your education and work experience in the UK will have a significant impact on your career and job opportunities both in the UK and back home?

☐ Yes

☐ Yes, but not completely

☐ Not now, but maybe in future

☐ do not know

Other (please specify)

Q 43- Do you feel that your immigration status has an adverse impact on your current and future employment scenario in the UK?

☐ Yes

☐ Yes, but not completely

☐ Not now, but maybe in future

☐ Do not know

☐ No effect at all

Other (please specify)

Q 44- What is your opinion about statements given below?

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My social-economic background is a determinant factor for my academic progress in the UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paid work has a negative effect on my academic performance in the UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paid work has a negative effect on my mental and physical well-being in the UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My colleagues who do not work, perform better than me in the classroom in the UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Q 45- Give your opinion about the feeling of insecurity that you may have?

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel insecure about my current/future employment in the UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel insecure about my income in the UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel insecure about my financial commitments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel insecure about my career	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel insecure about the employability of my study in the UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel insecure about my immigration status in the UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel insecure about my future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 46- You are welcome to add additional comments onto your experiences in the UK that you would like to share with us. (Please use space provided below)

Q 47- You are most welcome to take part in an interview to discuss your personal experiences in the UK in detail for which you will get £20 for your valuable time. If interested, please provide your contact information in the space provided below.

Many thanks for your participation

## (E) VALUES OF CAPITALS IN DETERMINING TRAJECTORIES

Respondent ID	Culture Capital	Economic Capital	Social Capital	Academic performance
Afghani Realist (Case 01)	3	3	2	Managing
Afghani Credentialist (Case 02)	2	2	2	Surviving
Bangladeshi Female Realist (Case 03)	3	3	2	Managing
Bangladeshi Realist (Case 04)	3	2	3	Managing
Bangladeshi Credentialist (Case 05)	2	2	2	Surviving
Bangladeshi Struggler (Case 06)	1	1	1	Struggling
Bangladeshi Realist (Case 07)	3	3	2	Managing
Bangladeshi Credentialist (Case 08)	2	2	2	Surviving
Bangladeshi Realist (Case 09)	3	3	3	Managing
Bangladeshi Credentialist (Case 10)	2	2	2	Surviving
Bangladeshi Credentialist (Case 11)	2	2	2	Surviving
Bhutanese Female Highflyer (Case 12)	4	3	4	Thriving
Bhutanese Female Highflyer (Case 13)	4	4	3	Thriving
Indian Female Highflyer (Case 14)	4	4	3	Thriving
Indian Female Realist (Case 15)	3	3	3	Managing
Indian Female Credentialist (Case 16)	3	2	2	Surviving
Indian Credentialist (Case 17)	2	3	2	Surviving
Indian Credentialist (Case 18)	3	2	2	Surviving
Indian Credentialist (Case 19)	2	2	2	Surviving
Indian Credentialist (Case 20)	2	2	2	Surviving
Indian Struggler (Case 21)	2	1	1	Struggling
Indian Credentialist (Case 22)	2	2	2	Surviving
Indian Credentialist (Case 23)	2	2	2	Surviving
Indian Credentialist (Case 24)	2	3	2	Surviving
Indian Struggler (Case 25)	2	1	1	Failing
Indian Highflyer (Case 26)	4	4	3	Thriving
Indian Realist (Case 27)	3	3	3	Managing
Indian Credentialist (Case 28)	2	3	2	Surviving
Indian Credentialist (Case 29)	2	3	3	Surviving
Indian Credentialist (Case 30)	2	3	3	Surviving
Indian Realist (Case 31)	2	3	3	Managing
Indian Realist (Case 32)	3	3	3	Managing
Indian Struggler (Case 33)	2	1	1	Struggling
Indian Highflyer (Case 34)	4	3	3	Thriving
Indian Credentialist (Case 35)	2	2	2	Surviving
Indian Credentialist (Case 36)	2	2	2	Surviving
Indian Female Credentialist (Case 37)	2	2	2	Failing

Indian Credentialist (Case 38)	2	2	2	Surviving
Indian Credentialist (Case 39)	2	2	2	Surviving
Nepali Credentialist(Case 40)	3	2	2	Surviving
Pakistani Female Highflyer (Case 41)	4	4	3	Thriving
Pakistani Female Realist (Case 42)	3	3	2	Managing
Pakistani Female Realist (Case 43)	3	3	2	Managing
Pakistani Female Realist (Case 44)	3	3	2	Managing
Pakistani Highflyer (Case 45)	1	4	4	Thriving
Pakistani Highflyer (Case 46)	4	3	3	Thriving
Pakistani Credentialist (Case 47)	3	2	2	Surviving
Pakistani Realist (Case 48)	3	3	2	Managing
Sri Lankan Female Realist (Case 49)	3	3	2	Managing
Sri Lankan Credentialist (Case 50)	2	2	2	Surviving
Sri Lankan Credentialist (Case 51)	2	2	2	Surviving

Source: Interviews

## (F) FAMILY ATTRIBUTES AND ACADEMIC PREPAREDNESS OF PARTICIPANTS

Respondent ID	Family Occupation & social attributes	Previous education	Prior International Education	Subject and Level of study in the UK	Financial support	Rationale to study abroad
Afghani Realist (Case 01)	Surgeon father, housewife mother	Schooling and Veterinary Science in Pakistan (Elite state education)	Pakistan	Healthcare (PG)	Family and self-funded	Quality education
Afghani Credentialist (Case 02)	Family business in Afghanistan	Schooling in Pakistan (Public education)	Pakistan	Mechanical Engineering (UG)	Self-funded	Escaping home
Bangladeshi Female Realist (Case 03)	She is a Civil officer in Govt of Bangladesh, and the husband is a businessman	B.com from Bangladesh, MSc. In Disaster Management from Australia funded by Australia aid (Elite state education)	Australia	MBA (PG)	Funded by Bangladesh Government	Quality education
Bangladeshi Realist (Case 04)	Family business in Bangladesh	Schooling in Bangladesh (Public education)	None	LLB (UG)	Family and self-funded	Escaping home/Family Enforcement
Bangladeshi Credentialist (Case 05)	Father is doing business in Saudi Arabia	Schooling from Bangladesh, Diploma in Law from the University of London (Public education)	Diploma from Uni.Of London	LLB (UG)	Family funded	Escaping home
Bangladeshi Struggler (Case 06)	Teacher father back in Bangladesh/poor background	UG in Bangladesh (Public education)	None	Business Studies (UG)	Self-funded from work in the UK	Escaping home
Bangladeshi Realist (Case 07)	Agriculture, big traditional family	UG and PG in psychology from Bangladesh (Public education)	None	Health Psychology (PG)	University of Westminster	Quality education
Bangladeshi Credentialist (Case 08)	Family business, commission agent	UG, PG from Bangladesh (Public education)	None	International business (PG)	Family and self-funded	Escaping home
Bangladeshi Realist (Case 09)	Family business in marketing in Bangladesh	BBA in finance from Bangladesh (Private but funded education)	None	International Finance (PG)	University of Westminster	Quality education
Bangladeshi Credentialist (Case 10)	Family business in Bangladesh	Schooling from Bangladesh (Public education)	None	BBA (UG)	Family-self funded	Second Chance
Bangladeshi Credentialist (Case 11)	Public Servant father	B.com from Bangladesh (Public education)	None	Business Management (PG)	Family funded	Escaping home
Bhutanese Female Highflyer (Case 12)	The Father runs a firm of construction and mother is Gynaecologist in Bhutan	Schooling in Bhutan, UG from India on Govt funding. (Private education funded by Govt. Of Bhutan)	India	Health Psychology (PG)	Family funded	Reproducing advantages

Bhutanese Female Highflyer (Case 13)	She is a customs officer in Bhutan; Police Officer Father studied in the US	Schooling and UG in India (Private education, privately funded)	India	Business Management (PG)	Funded by The Govt. Of Bhutan	Reproducing advantages
Indian Female Highflyer (Case 14)	The Family runs Diamond, Gold Jewellery Business in Mumbai	Schooling and B.E in software engineering from India (Elite private education)	None	MBA (PG)	Family funded	Reproducing advantages
Indian Female Realist (Case 15)	Engineer father, brothers are engineer in India	Schooling and UG from India (Elite education)	None	Criminology (PG)	Family funded	Quality education
Indian Female Credentialist (Case 16)	Father is privately employed in India	Schooling and PG in physiotherapy in India (Private education)	None	Physiotherapy (PG)	Family funded	Quality education
Indian Credentialist (Case 17)	Father is a construction business, a Diaspora connection in the UK	Schooling in India (Elite private education)	None	Pre-session course before UG in the UK	Family funded	Escaping home/ family inspired
Indian Credentialist (Case 18)	Trainer in Air India, Father, is an engineer and mother is an administrator	Schooling and B.E. Electronics in India (Public elite education)	None	MBA (PG)	Family funded	Qualification Recognition
Indian Credentialist (Case 19)	Father works in Diamond factory	B.E. Computer Engineer in India (Private education)	None	MBA (PG)	Family funded	Second chance/ failed
Indian Credentialist (Case 20)	Father is a surgeon in India	Schooling in India, Medicine from China (Elite private education)	MBBS, China	MBA (PG)	Family funded	Quality education
Indian Struggler (Case 21)	Agriculture, Father used to be in the Middle East	Schooling in India (public education)	None	Cyber Security (PG)	Self-funded	Escaping home
Indian Credentialist (Case 22)	Middle-class family	Schooling and UG from India (Public education)	None	Business studies (PG)	Family funded	Escaping home
Indian Credentialist (Case 23)	Family Business	Schooling and UG from India (Public education)	None	Marketing and business (PG)	Family funded	Escaping home
Indian Credentialist (Case 24)	Father is a lawyer, middle-class family	Schooling and UG from India (Public education)	None	MBA (PG)	Funded by Govt. Of India	Second Chance
Indian Struggler (Case 25)	Family Business of jewellery in Mumbai	Schooling and UG in India (Elite education)	None	MBA (PG)	Family funded	Escaping home
Indian Highflyer (Case 26)	Textile import and export business	Schooling in Singapore, Indonesia, India (Elite education)	Indonesia, Singapore	Fashion Management(UG)	Family funded	Reproducing advantages
Indian Realist (Case 27)	Widow mother works in an Indian oil corporation	Schooling and UG in India (Private education)	None	MBA (PG)	Family funded	Escaping home

Indian Credentialist (Case 28)	Father works in a Diamond firm in India	Schooling and B.com in India (Private education)	None	International business (PG)	Family funded	Escaping home
Indian Credentialist (Case 29)	Father is a businessman	Schooling in India (Elite private education)	None	International business (PG)	Family funded	Escaping home
Indian Credentialist (Case 30)	Father is a businessman in real estate and property	Schooling in India, UG from the UK in management (Elite private education)	UG from the UK	International business (PG)	Family funded	Reproduction of advantages
Indian Realist (Case 31)	Father is a Businessman and mother runs a firm in India	Schooling in India (Elite private education)	None	Management (UG)	Family funded	Reproducing advantage
Indian Realist (Case 32)	Business Investment in India	B.Sc. Forensic science in India	None	Forensic Science (UG)	Family funded	Second Chance
Indian Struggler (Case 33)	Agriculture, small business	Schooling, Mechanical Engineering in India (Public education)	None	Manufacturing (PG)	Family funded	Second Chance
Indian Highflyer (Case 34)	Engineer father in Dubai	Schooling in Dubai, Chemical Engineering from NIT, India (Elite private education)	Dubai, India	Petroleum engineering (PG)	Family funded	Quality education
Indian Credentialist (Case 35)	Family Business	Schooling and B.com in India (Public education)	None	International business & finance (PG)	Family funded	Reproducing advantages
Indian Credentialist (Case 36)	Small family business	Schooling and BBA from India (Private education)	None	MBA (PG)	Family/Bank Loan	Second Chance
Indian Female Credentialist (Case 37)	Lower middle-class family	Schooling from India (Public sector education)	None	MBA (PG) (incomplete)	Self-funded	Second Chance
Indian Credentialist (Case 38)	Family business	Schooling from India (Public education)	None	International Business & Marketing (PG)	Family funded	Escaping home
Indian Credentialist (Case 39)	Family business	Schooling from India (Private education)	None	BBA (UG)	Family funded	Escaping home
Nepali Credentialist (Case 40)	Family business, Brother, studied in Canada	Schooling in Nepal (Public education)	None	Biology (UG)	Family-self funded	Escaping home
Pakistani Female Highflyer (Case 41)	Engineer father runs a Business; the mechanical engineer husband had done MBA from the UK	Elite schooling and Elite UG in Architecture with Gold medal and have been funded for most of her education. (Elite education)	None	International planning and sustainable development (PG)	University of Westminster	Reproduction of advantages
Pakistani Female Realist (Case 42)	Family business, Husband works in the UK	Masters in financial economics from Pakistan, Masters in Finance from the UK (Private education)	Masters from the UK	PhD in financial analysis	Self-funded	Quality education

Pakistani Female Realist (Case 43)	Father is a manager in a textile company, a Diaspora connection in the UK	A level from Pakistan. (Private elite education)	None	Foundation for UG in Criminal Psychology	Family funded	Second Chance
Pakistani Female Realist (Case 44)	Engineer father is working in Kuwait, Married sister in Canada	Schooling in Kuwait and ACCA and B.sc. Honours from Oxford Brookes University (distance learning) (Private elite education)	Kuwait, Pakistan	MBA (PG)	Family funded	Reproduction of advantages
Pakistani Highflyer (Case 45)	Family Business in Pakistan	A level in Pakistan (Elite private education)	None	Business and Management (UG)	Family-self funded	Reproduction of advantages
Pakistani Highflyer (Case 46)	Father used to be working in Saudi Arabia as a Mechanical Engineer	Schooling in Saudi Arabia, UG finance and economics in Pakistan (Elite Private education)	Saudi Arabia	Transport planning (PG)	Funded by Govt. Of Pakistan	Reproducing advantages
Pakistani Credentialist (Case 47)	Father has died; Uncle is Guardian in London as a Diaspora connection	Schooling in Pakistan, sixth form college in Britain (Elite private education)	None	B.A. Business (UG)	Funded by British Uncle	Family Enforcement
Pakistani Realist (Case 48)	The Father owns family business, a Diaspora connection in London	Schooling in Pakistan, ACCA and Bsc. Applied Accountancy from Oxford Brookes University (Private education)	None	Management and leadership (PG)	Family funded	Escaping home
Sri Lankan Female Realist (Case 49)	Privileged family, Grand mum had a PhD from the UK, Diaspora connection	GCSC from Sri Lanka, (Elite Private education)	None	UG in Microbiology	Family funded	Second Chance
Sri Lankan Credentialist (Case 50)	Father is a lecturer in the college; Brother went to India for studies	Schooling in Sri Lanka, (Private education)	None	Fashion designs with marketing (UG)	Family funded	Escaping home
Sri Lankan Credentialist (Case 51)	The Family business of building material supply	Schooling and UG from Sri Lanka (Private education)	None	Computer Sciences (PG)	Family/ self-funded	Second Chance

Source: Interviews

## (G) SURVEY RESULTS AND STATISTICAL TEST TABLES

Table -1 Why study aboard

Why study abroad Frequencies	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N=125	Percent	
Lack of Study Opportunity at home	36	11.0%	28.8%
Competition to get into best institution at home	36	11.0%	28.8%
Affordability	10	3.0%	8.0%
Easy Access to Information	10	3.0%	8.0%
Better Employability of Western Education	76	23.2%	60.8%
Work opportunity during and after study	58	17.7%	46.4%
Influence of family and friends	54	16.5%	43.2%
Political, economic situation of home country	19	5.8%	15.2%
Maintain Social Status	29	8.8%	23.2%
Total	328	100.0%	262.4%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table -2 The purpose of choosing the UK

The Purpose to choose UK	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N=123	Percent	
To Improve English Language	41	11.3%	33.3%
To Learn about British Culture	17	4.7%	13.8%
To obtain British Degree	74	20.3%	60.2%
To Improve Career Prospects	92	25.3%	74.8%
To Personal Independence	28	7.7%	22.8%
To Interest In Subject Area	43	11.8%	35.0%
To Broaden life experiences	69	19.0%	56.1%
Total	364	100.0%	295.9%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table -3 Financial contribution to academic fee

Contribution to Academic fee	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N= 122	Percent	
Family/Relatives	97	46.4%	79.5%
Scholarship/ Bursary	17	8.1%	13.9%
Bank or other Loan	57	27.3%	46.7%
Personal savings and paid Employment in the UK	38	18.2%	31.1%
Total	209	100.0%	171.3%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table -4 Financial contributions to living in the UK

Contribution to living in the UK	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N=131	Percent	
Family	92	43.4%	70.2%
Scholarship/ Bursary	20	9.4%	15.4%
Loan	53	25.0%	40.5%
Employer	1	0.5%	0.8%
Personal savings and paid Employment in the UK	46	21.7%	35.1%
Total	212	100.0%	161.8%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table -5 Participation in University life\*Adjustment to University life

Crosstab					
Participation in University life		Adjusted To University Life			Total
		A Lot	To some extent	Not Much	
Completely true	Count	20	18	0	38
	Expected Count	13.0	16.4	8.6	38.0
Partly true	Count	12	25	18	55
	Expected Count	18.8	23.8	12.4	55.0
False and do not know	Count	6	5	7	18
	Expected Count	6.2	7.8	4.1	18.0
Total	Count	38	48	25	111
	Expected Count	38.0	48.0	25.0	111.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.687 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	28.519	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	11.887	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	111		

a. 1 cells (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.05.

Table -6 Participation in University life\* Adjustment to life in the UK

Crosstab					
Participation in University life		Adjusted To Life In the UK			Total
		A Lot	To some extent	Not Much	
Completely true	Count	25	13	0	38
	Expected Count	16.1	19.2	2.7	38.0
Partly true	Count	14	34	7	55
	Expected Count	23.3	27.7	4.0	55.0
False and do not know	Count	8	9	1	18
	Expected Count	7.6	9.1	1.3	18.0
Total	Count	47	56	8	111
	Expected Count	47.0	56.0	8.0	111.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.185 <sup>a</sup>	4	.002
Likelihood Ratio	19.557	4	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.121	1	.013
N of Valid Cases	111		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.30.



Table -7 participation in university life\* relationship with tutor

Crosstab					
Participation in University life		Relationship with tutors			Total
		Completely true	partly true	False and do not know	
Completely true	Count	29	8	1	38
	Expected Count	15.7	15.4	6.8	38.0
Partly true	Count	12	31	12	55
	Expected Count	22.8	22.3	9.9	55.0
False and do not know	Count	5	6	7	18
	Expected Count	7.5	7.3	3.2	18.0
Total	Count	46	45	20	111
	Expected Count	46.0	45.0	20.0	111.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	34.046 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	35.130	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	22.457	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	111		

a. 1 cells (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.24.

Table -8 Adjusted to life in the UK\* Adjusted to university life

Adjusted To Life In the UK * Adjusted To University Life Cross tabulation					
		Adjusted To University Life			Total
		A Lot	To some extent	Not Much	
A Lot	Count	36	18	0	54
	Expected Count	19.9	22.6	11.5	54.0
To some extent	Count	9	32	18	59
	Expected Count	21.8	24.7	12.6	59.0
Not Much	Count	0	1	8	9
	Expected Count	3.3	3.8	1.9	9.0
Total	Count	45	51	26	122
	Expected Count	45.0	51.0	26.0	122.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	62.061 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	68.353	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	52.444	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	122		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.92.

Table -9 Participation in University life

Participation in University life	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Completely true	38	25.7	34.2	34.2
Partly true	55	37.2	49.5	83.8
False and do not know	18	12.2	16.2	100.0
Total	111	75.0	100.0	
System	37	25.0		
Total	148	100.0		

Table -10 Participation in the class

Participation in the class	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Completely True	100	67.6	90.1	90.1
Partly true	11	7.4	9.9	100.0
Total	111	75.0	100.0	
Missing System	37	25.0		
Total	148	100.0		

TABLE 11- Relationship with tutor\* comparative performance

Crosstab					
Relationship with tutors		Comparative performance			Total
		Completely True	Partly True	False and do not know	
Completely true	Count	11	24	11	46
	Expected Count	5.4	18.2	22.4	46.0
partly true	Count	1	16	28	45
	Expected Count	5.3	17.8	21.9	45.0
False and do not know	Count	1	4	15	20
	Expected Count	2.3	7.9	9.7	20.0
Total	Count	13	44	54	111
	Expected Count	13.0	44.0	54.0	111.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.380 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	26.056	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	19.727	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	111		

a. 1 cells (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.34.

TABLE 12 Relationship with tutor\* Academic performance

Crosstab							
Relationship with tutors		Academic Performance					Total
		Underachiever	Average student	More than average	Excellent student	Do not know	
Completely true	Count	0	12	16	14	3	45
	Expected Count	4.1	21.1	12.0	6.2	1.7	45.0
partly true	Count	5	29	10	1	0	45
	Expected Count	4.1	21.1	12.0	6.2	1.7	45.0
False and do not know	Count	5	10	3	0	1	19
	Expected Count	1.7	8.9	5.1	2.6	.7	19.0
Total	Count	10	51	29	15	4	109
	Expected Count	10.0	51.0	29.0	15.0	4.0	109.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	59.640 <sup>a</sup>	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	45.926	8	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	25.982	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	109		

a. 7 cells (46.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .70.

TABLE 13 Working hard in the class

Working hard in the class	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Completely True	83	56.1	74.8	74.8
Partly True	27	18.2	24.3	99.1
False and do not know	1	.7	.9	100.0
Total	111	75.0	100.0	
System	37	25.0		
Total	148	100.0		

TABLE 14 Relationship with tutor \* I am concerned with relationship with tutor

Crosstab							
Relationship with tutors		I Am Concerned-Relation With Tutor					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Nor	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Completely true	Count	3	11	10	17	5	46
	Expected Count	1.2	21.1	11.2	10.4	2.1	46.0
partly true	Count	0	28	11	6	0	45
	Expected Count	1.2	20.7	10.9	10.1	2.0	45.0
False and do not know	Count	0	12	6	2	0	20
	Expected Count	.5	9.2	4.9	4.5	.9	20.0
Total	Count	3	51	27	25	5	111
	Expected Count	3.0	51.0	27.0	25.0	5.0	111.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27.345 <sup>a</sup>	8	.001
Likelihood Ratio	30.791	8	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	11.209	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	111		

a. 8 cells (53.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .54.

TABLE 15- relationship with tutors\* worried failing my exam

Crosstab							
Relationship with tutors		I Am Worried –Failing My Exam					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Nor	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Completely true	Count	4	10	11	11	9	45
	Expected Count	7.8	16.5	8.3	7.8	4.5	45.0
partly true	Count	10	19	5	8	2	44
	Expected Count	7.7	16.1	8.1	7.7	4.4	44.0
False and do not know	Count	5	11	4	0	0	20
	Expected Count	3.5	7.3	3.7	3.5	2.0	20.0
Total	Count	19	40	20	19	11	109
	Expected Count	19.0	40.0	20.0	19.0	11.0	109.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	22.767 <sup>a</sup>	8	.004
Likelihood Ratio	28.022	8	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	17.946	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	109		

a. 6 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.02.

TABLE 16 Relationship with tutor\* feeling uncomfortable in joining small group discussion

Relationship with tutors		Crosstab					Total
		I Feeling Uncomfortable Joining Small Group Discuss					
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Nor	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Completely true	Count	2	5	10	23	6	46
	Expected Count	2.1	14.9	9.9	15.3	3.7	46.0
partly true	Count	3	19	11	10	2	45
	Expected Count	2.0	14.6	9.7	15.0	3.6	45.0
False and do not know	Count	0	12	3	4	1	20
	Expected Count	.9	6.5	4.3	6.7	1.6	20.0
Total	Count	5	36	24	37	9	111
	Expected Count	5.0	36.0	24.0	37.0	9.0	111.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.485 <sup>a</sup>	8	.003
Likelihood Ratio	25.470	8	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.790	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	111		

a. 7 cells (46.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .90.

TABLE 17- Relationship with tutor\* I feel uncomfortable in speaking in Academic discussion

Crosstab							
Relationship with tutors		I Feel Uncomfortable Speak In Academic Discussion					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Nor	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Completely true	Count	2	9	9	16	10	46
	Expected Count	2.5	19.1	9.1	10.8	4.6	46.0
partly true	Count	3	23	10	9	0	45
	Expected Count	2.4	18.6	8.9	10.5	4.5	45.0
False and do not know	Count	1	14	3	1	1	20
	Expected Count	1.1	8.3	4.0	4.7	2.0	20.0
Total	Count	6	46	22	26	11	111
	Expected Count	6.0	46.0	22.0	26.0	11.0	111.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27.963 <sup>a</sup>	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	32.494	8	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	19.406	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	111		

a. 8 cells (53.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.08.

TABLE 18 Relationship with tutor\* Not sure where to get academic help

Crosstab							
Relationship with tutors		Not Sure Where To Get Academic Help					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Nor	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Completely true	Count	0	5	17	19	5	46
	Expected Count	.8	14.9	14.5	12.0	3.7	46.0
partly true	Count	2	20	12	8	3	45
	Expected Count	.8	14.6	14.2	11.8	3.6	45.0
False and do not know	Count	0	11	6	2	1	20
	Expected Count	.4	6.5	6.3	5.2	1.6	20.0
Total	Count	2	36	35	29	9	111
	Expected Count	2.0	36.0	35.0	29.0	9.0	111.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.486 <sup>a</sup>	8	.003
Likelihood Ratio	25.875	8	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	14.580	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	111		

a. 6 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .36.

TABLE 19 Relationship with tutor\* Quality class environment

Relationship with tutors		Quality Class Environment				Total
		Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Nor	Dissatisfied	
Completely true	Count	11	32	2	1	46
	Expected Count	7.0	34.0	3.3	1.7	46.0
partly true	Count	5	38	1	1	45
	Expected Count	6.9	33.2	3.2	1.6	45.0
False and do not know	Count	1	12	5	2	20
	Expected Count	3.1	14.8	1.4	.7	20.0
Total	Count	17	82	8	4	111
	Expected Count	17.0	82.0	8.0	4.0	111.0

## Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.075 <sup>a</sup>	6	.004
Likelihood Ratio	15.848	6	.015
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.766	1	.002
N of Valid Cases	111		

a. 7 cells (58.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .72.

TABLE 20 Relationship with tutor\* adjusted to University life

Relationship with tutors		Adjusted To University Life			Total
		A Lot	To some extent	Not Much	
Completely true	Count	26	17	3	46
	Expected Count	15.7	19.9	10.4	46.0
partly true	Count	9	23	13	45
	Expected Count	15.4	19.5	10.1	45.0
False and do not know	Count	3	8	9	20
	Expected Count	6.8	8.6	4.5	20.0
Total	Count	38	48	25	111
	Expected Count	38.0	48.0	25.0	111.0

## Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.138 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	24.042	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	20.120	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	111		

a. 1 cells (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.50.

TABLE 21 Relationship with tutor\* Adjusted to the life in the UK

Relationship with tutors		Adjusted To Life in the UK			Total
		A Lot	To some extent	Not Much	
Completely true	Count	33	12	1	46
	Expected Count	19.5	23.2	3.3	46.0
partly true	Count	10	32	3	45
	Expected Count	19.1	22.7	3.2	45.0
False and do not know	Count	4	12	4	20
	Expected Count	8.5	10.1	1.4	20.0
Total	Count	47	56	8	111
	Expected Count	47.0	56.0	8.0	111.0

## Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	31.806 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	31.504	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	23.244	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	111		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.44.

TABLE 22 How useful library service\* academic performance

How Useful Service-Library		Academic Performance					Total
		Underachiever	Average student	More than average	Excellent student	Do not know	
Very Useful	Count	3	24	24	12	0	63
	Expected Count	5.3	27.8	19.2	8.0	2.7	63.0
Useful	Count	6	25	12	3	4	50
	Expected Count	4.2	22.0	15.3	6.4	2.1	50.0
Neither Nor	Count	0	3	0	0	1	4
	Expected Count	.3	1.8	1.2	.5	.2	4.0
Useless	Count	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Expected Count	.1	.4	.3	.1	.0	1.0
Total	Count	10	52	36	15	5	118
	Expected Count	10.0	52.0	36.0	15.0	5.0	118.0

## Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	30.457 <sup>a</sup>	12	.002
Likelihood Ratio	26.903	12	.008
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.341	1	.126
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 13 cells (65.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .04.

TABLE-23 How useful library\* Participation in the class

How Useful- Library		58 Participation in the class		Total
		Completely True	Partly true	
Very Useful	Count	54	4	58
	Expected Count	52.6	5.4	58.0
Useful	Count	40	5	45
	Expected Count	40.8	4.2	45.0
Neither Nor	Count	4	0	4
	Expected Count	3.6	.4	4.0
Useless	Count	0	1	1
	Expected Count	.9	.1	1.0
Total	Count	98	10	108
	Expected Count	98.0	10.0	108.0

## Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.777 <sup>a</sup>	3	.013
Likelihood Ratio	6.129	3	.105
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.281	1	.131
N of Valid Cases	108		

a. 5 cells (62.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .09.

TABLE -24 Relationship with tutor\*academic performance

Relationship with tutors		Academic Performance					Total
		Under achiever	Average student	More than average	Excellent student	Do not know	
Completely true	Count	0	12	16	14	3	45
	Expected Count	4.1	21.1	12.0	6.2	1.7	45.0
partly true	Count	5	29	10	1	0	45
	Expected Count	4.1	21.1	12.0	6.2	1.7	45.0
False and do not know	Count	5	10	3	0	1	19
	Expected Count	1.7	8.9	5.1	2.6	.7	19.0
Total	Count	10	51	29	15	4	109
	Expected Count	10.0	51.0	29.0	15.0	4.0	109.0

## Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	39.640 <sup>a</sup>	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	45.926	8	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	25.982	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	109		

a. 7 cells (46.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .70.

TABLE 25 -Relationship with tutor\*comparative performance

Crosstab					
Comparative performance		Relationship with tutors			Total
		Completely true	partly true	False and do not know	
Completely True	Count	11	1	1	13
	Expected Count	5.4	5.3	2.3	13.0
Partly True	Count	24	16	4	44
	Expected Count	18.2	17.8	7.9	44.0
False and do not know	Count	11	28	15	54
	Expected Count	22.4	21.9	9.7	54.0
Total	Count	46	45	20	111
	Expected Count	46.0	45.0	20.0	111.0

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	
Pearson Chi-Square	24.380 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000	
Likelihood Ratio	26.056	4	.000	
Linear-by-Linear Association	19.727	1	.000	
N of Valid Cases	111			

a. 1 cells (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.34.

TABLE 26 -Relationship with classmates\* academic performance

Crosstab						
Relationships with class mates		Academic Performance				Total
		Underachiever	Average student	More than average	Excellent student	
Completely true	Count	0	11	16	12	43
	Expected Count	3.9	20.1	11.4	5.9	43.0
Partly true	Count	7	31	9	3	50
	Expected Count	4.6	23.4	13.3	6.9	50.0
False and do not know	Count	3	9	4	0	16
	Expected Count	1.5	7.5	4.3	2.2	16.0
Total	Count	10	51	29	15	109
	Expected Count	10.0	51.0	29.0	15.0	109.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	33.732 <sup>a</sup>	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	40.321	8	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	26.366	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	109		

a. 8 cells (53.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .59.

TABLE 27 Comparative performance\* adjusted to university life

Crosstab					
Comparative performance		Adjusted To University Life			Total
		A Lot	To some extent	Not Much	
Completely True	Count	9	4	0	13
	Expected Count	4.5	5.6	2.9	13.0
Partly True	Count	21	19	4	44
	Expected Count	15.1	19.0	9.9	44.0
False and do not know	Count	8	25	21	54
	Expected Count	18.5	23.4	12.2	54.0
Total	Count	38	48	25	111
	Expected Count	38.0	48.0	25.0	111.0

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	
Pearson Chi-Square	26.398 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000	
Likelihood Ratio	29.547	4	.000	
Linear-by-Linear Association	24.786	1	.000	
N of Valid Cases	111			

a. 2 cells (22.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.93.

TABLE 28 Comparative performance\* adjusted to the life in the UK

Crosstab					
Comparative performance		Adjusted To Life in UK			Total
		A Lot	To some extent	Not Much	
Completely True	Count	9	4	0	13
	Expected Count	5.5	6.6	.9	13.0
Partly True	Count	27	15	2	44
	Expected Count	18.6	22.2	3.2	44.0
False and do not know	Count	11	37	6	54
	Expected Count	22.9	27.2	3.9	54.0
Total	Count	47	56	8	111
	Expected Count	47.0	56.0	8.0	111.0

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	
Pearson Chi-Square	21.474 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000	
Likelihood Ratio	23.076	4	.000	
Linear-by-Linear Association	17.401	1	.000	
N of Valid Cases	111			

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .94.

TABLE 29- Comparative performance\* relationship with classmates

Crosstab					
Comparative performance		Relationships with class mates			Total
		Completely true	Partly true	False and do not know	
Completely True	Count	9	3	1	13
	Expected Count	5.2	5.9	2.0	13.0
Partly True	Count	23	19	2	44
	Expected Count	17.4	19.8	6.7	44.0
False and do not know	Count	12	28	14	54
	Expected Count	21.4	24.3	8.3	54.0
Total	Count	44	50	17	111
	Expected Count	44.0	50.0	17.0	111.0

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	
Pearson Chi-Square	18.553 <sup>a</sup>	4	.001	
Likelihood Ratio	19.638	4	.001	
Linear-by-Linear Association	15.546	1	.000	
N of Valid Cases	111			

a. 1 cells (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.99.

TABLE 30- Impact of difficulties over study and life\* Work experiences

Cross tabulation				
Impact of Difficulties over study and life		Do you have work experiences in the UK		Total
		Yes	No	
Yes	Count	48	16	64
	Expected Count	39.9	24.1	64.0
No	Count	23	27	50
	Expected Count	31.1	18.9	50.0
Total	Count	71	43	114
	Expected Count	71.0	43.0	114.0

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.049 <sup>a</sup>	1	.002		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	8.852	1	.003		
Likelihood Ratio	10.116	1	.001		
Fisher's Exact Test				.002	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.961	1	.002		
N of Valid Cases	114				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 18.86.  
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Crosstab

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.554 <sup>a</sup>	2	.001
Likelihood Ratio	13.879	2	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.389	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	108		

Expected credit: 3.00

Cross tabulation

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.838 <sup>a</sup>	2	.004
Likelihood Ratio	10.846	2	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.811	1	.009
N of Valid Cases	108		

### Study and life-time relationship with tutors

Crosstab

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.332 <sup>a</sup>	2	.009
Likelihood Ratio	9.391	2	.009
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.698	1	.006
N of Valid Cases	108		

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